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PlayStation®2

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-AUSTRALIA

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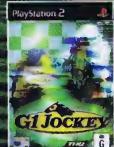
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OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-AUSTRALIA

ISSUE 02 / MAY 2002

GAME REVIEWS



ON THE COVER

Could we BE more excited about Spidey's next adventure?

PREVIEWS

- 010 **V8 SUPERCARS RACE DRIVER**
Whether yours is the 'F' word or the 'H' word, this game is going to have racing fans screeching with delight. Like girls.
- 014 **BARBARIAN**
For the animal in you.
- 016 **SPIDER-MAN**
We got to play - and we like what we see.
- 018 **SUPERMAN**
- 020 **2002 FIFA WORLD CUP**
- 022 **RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP**
- 024 **MATT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX 2**
- 025 **TAZ WANTED**
- 026 **CONFLICT DESERT STORM**
- 027 **GITAROO MAN**
- 028 **PRISONER OF WAR**

066 VIRTUA FIGHTER 4

So how good is it really?

070 STAR WARS: RACER REVENGE

Twice the speed, half the fat.

072 RED CARD SOCCER 2003

Soccer as it should be: fouls galore, blind ref.

074 KNOCKOUT KINGS 2002

074 TIGER WOODS USA TOUR 2003

075 IRON EAGLE MAX

075 ALL STAR BASEBALL 2003

076 STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER

077 PIRATES: LEGEND OF BLACK KAT

078 FINAL FANTASY ANTHOLOGY

078 DRAGON RAGE

079 JONNY MOSELEY MAD TRIX

079 HIGH HEAT BASEBALL 2003

FEATURES

044 THE PS2 INTERVIEW:

FUMITO UEDA

Responsible for Ico, one of the most original and captivating adventures ever seen on PlayStation, this man deserves a medal. We interview him instead.

048 THE V-SIGN

What has V-Rally 3 got over Colin McRae 3, you ask? Dive in here and take a look at the game Eden Studios says will leave our favourite Scot for dead.

052 DOWNLOADED...UK

In which our OPS2 reporter checks out what cool stuff is shaping up over in brass monkey land.

056 GENERATION V

We jet off to the USA and visit Acclaim. What did we find? A new little gem called Vexx.

060 SAMURAI SHOWDOWN

OPS2 talks to Keiji Inafune and finds out what we can look forward to in the next round of bashing folk from the 16th century.

REGULARS

006 Editor's Letter

030 Subscribe

Sign up to get the mag delivered direct to your door and you're in with a chance of winning a free game!

032 Spy

Including news on PlayStation 2 exclusive Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness, Star Wars Bounty Hunter, Need for Speed, Malice yes, Malice! Robocop, and Futurama.

047 Next Month

065 Reviews

New games rated!

078 PSone Reviews

Final Fantasy Anthology.

080 Media

AJ. on DVD and other action-packed movie reviews!

084 Postal

Write in, maybe win a game.

087 Hardcore

Headhunter walkthrough, MGS2, GTA3 and all sorts of games with initials as names.

096 Competitions

&88. Win a whole bunch of stuff. Not in bunches.

PlayStation®2

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MAX'S TOP 2

WRC Challenge

[SCE] Out now

I can't get enough of this rally sim. Switch the view to half-cockpit and STAY IN IT - no matter what, broken windscreen and all - and the experience is transformed.

FIFA 2002 WORLD CUP

[EA] April

It's harder, it's grittier and I'm still not quite convinced, but where else can you take Australia through to the World Cup final?



RICHIE'S TOP 2

Virtua Fighter 4

[Sega] Out now

You can only get so much of beating down everybody else at Pro Evolution Soccer here at OPS2. This is the next one I'll be mastering!

Star Wars Racer Revenge

[LucasArts] Out now

I'm actually nowhere near being the biggest Star Wars fan in the world, but this game is fine. Super smooth and sweet to handle, this is fast becoming my favourite racer.



EDITOR'S LETTER



Any gamer who's ever picked up a Marvel or DC comic and become entranced with the stories told about superheroes with extraordinary powers gets excited about a game that attempts to recreate the magic. Who doesn't want to be cast as Superman or Batman in a game where you are the hero and you get to save the world? Without having to step out the front door - without having to put on tights and knickers in the wrong order, even? It's a fantasy - and one that the simultaneous release of *Spider-Man: the Movie* and the game based on that film bring one step closer to reality next month. Anticipating our enthusiasm, OPS2 was insistent on a hands-on preview and rallied Activision into revealing the game to us. What resulted? An exclusive hands-on preview! Read the results from page 16.

On the exclusive DVD this issue, there's a very nice surprise - a playable demo of that game everyone is asking about, *Final Fantasy X*. Yes! *FINAL FANTASY XI* And yes, it IS coming out very soon. On 31 May, in fact. But until then, this is your chance to have a go and see what all the fuss is about. We may be the last territory in the known universe to be graced with the blockbuster's presence, but I think you'll agree it's worth the wait.

Elsewhere, we have a massive feature revealing a whole bunch of great games in development in Europe - including a hands-on test run of V8 Supercars and three games based around that 'other' licensing deal that seems to throw up as many duds as direct hits, *Star Wars*. Game on.

MAX EVERINGHAM
Editor

SUBSCRIPTIONS

PHONE: 136 116

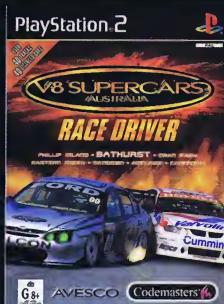
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*Offer applies to Australian residents only





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MAXIMO.



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MAXIMO

Ghosts to Glory

PlayStation®2



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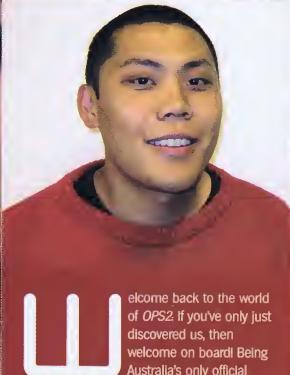
G 8+
Low Level
Animated
Violence



ON THE DVD

PLAYABLE DEMOS

OTHER MAGAZINES LET YOU WATCH, OPS2 LETS YOU PLAY..



Welcome back to the world of OPS2 if you've only just discovered us, then welcome on board! Being Australia's only official

PlayStation magazine means a lot. It means that you can rely on us for news and accurate information in terms of game releases and details. It also means that your magazine will come with an exclusive PS2 DVD demo disc every single month. Why look anywhere else?

For your gaming pleasure this month, we've secured four demos ready for you to wear thin. We have the King of all RPG games in *Final Fantasy X* which is proving to be the most enthralling and beautiful adventure ever. SC's new rally master in *Rally Championship*, *Taz Wanted* (previewed on page 25 in this very issue) and *Space Race* featuring all of your favourite characters from the *Looney Tunes* cartoons.

Of course, we have the very best in video previews as well. This month, check out *V-Rally 3*, *Blood Omen 2*, *Red Faction*, *Star Wars: Starfighter*, *Shadow Hearts*, *Barbarian and Downforce*. We also take you 'Inside' the Naughty Dog Studios for the making of *Jax and Daxter*. Get over to your couch and enjoy.


Richie Young
Donuts Editor

Richie Young
Deputy Editor

PS To use this DVD, load it up on your PS2. Then scroll between games and rolling demos with the ↓ and ↑ keys. To choose within a section use ← and →. Press X to start up your choice. Please note, you may have to reset your PS2 after some demos.



**PLAY
DEMO
ONE**

FINAL FANTASY X

Publisher: SCEA / Game type: RPG / Out: May / Players:

THE GAME

The FF franchise steps up a gear to produce one of the most visually striking games ever. The epic story follows the fortunes of Tidus, a young Blitzball player, who's home of Zanarkand is destroyed by a powerful elemental force known as Sin. Thrown 1,000 years into the future by Sin's cataclysmic attack, Tidus finds himself in a strange land called Spira, where his destiny becomes intertwined with a young woman named Yuna. Along the way, Tidus discovers that the mysterious disappearance of his father several years previously is also linked to the force of Sin.

THE DEMO

After watching the intro sequence, use ←→ and X to choose to play at either Zanarkand or Besaid Island. Choosing the former will start the demo at Tidus's first encounter with Sin. Opting for the latter will start the demo after Tidus has been catapulted into the future. After being attacked by Kimahri, you'll meet Yuna and her guardians and get your first real chance to fight fends as a player. Use □ during combat to switch to other characters. For extra power, use Yuna to summon Valefor.

DEMO MOVIES

V-RALLY 3

Top notch car physics, a huge leap in resolution and a great range of rally machines.

BLOOD OMEN 2

In this excellent preview, we see Kalin re-learning the superhuman 'Dark Gift' abilities that will help him regain his power in the land of Nosgoth.

SHADOW HEARTS

A surprisingly enjoyable RPG from Midway, this is just the tonic for RPG fans needing a fix!

BARBARIAN

Multi-tiered and interactive, this fighter will be an enjoyable and original addition to any collection.

DOWNFORCE

Spectacular crashes, dangerous manoeuvres and skilful driving are the order of the day.

EXTRAS

THE MAKING OF: JAK & DAXTER

An exclusive behind-the-scenes look at the Naughty Dog Studios. These guys, of course also brought the *Crash Bandicoot* games into the world!

PLUS PLATINUM PLAYABLE:

Moto GP™

Narciso's two-wheeled racer has finally gone Platinum. Never played it? Then now's your chance!

PLUS PLATINUM MOVIES:

Red Faction™

One of the best and most innovative shooters to appear so far on the PS2.

Star Wars: Starfighter™

A stunning, intergalactic visual feast brought to you in this highlights video.

PLAY DEMO TWO

THE CONTROLS

- L-stick - Move
- R-stick - Rotate camera
- Ⓐ Jump
- Ⓑ Spin (to push trolley in two-player)
- ⓐ Eat/split
- /○ Rotate camera
- △ Tiptoe
- First person view
- Map

TAZ WANTED

Publisher: Infogrames/Game type: Platformer/Out: May/Players: 1-2

THE GAME

Developed by UK-based Blitz games, *Taz Wanted* is the first PS2 outing for the Antipodean marsupial menace. Made a fugitive by Yosemite Sam, Taz must locate wanted posters on each of the game's cartoon levels and remove them to clear his name so he can return to Tasmania. Taz has a host of special disguises to aid him in his quest, with a unique one to discover for each level, including a radical skateboarder and a DJ, complete with wheels of steel. The game also includes a series of unlockable mini-games, such as the completely Insane Elephant Pong.

THE DEMO

Once loaded, press Ⓢ to select a language, then ↑/↓ and Ⓣ to choose between a one-player or two-player shopping race.

The demo takes place in Loonigdale's department store, where security guards and dogs are lurking, ready to give Taz a good kicking, so be careful. You've got four minutes to find the four wanted posters, eat as many sandwiches as possible and generally smash the place up. The two-player game is a Taz vs She-Devil shopping trolley race around three laps of the shop.

PLAY DEMO THREE

THE CONTROLS

- L-stick - Steer
- Ⓐ Accelerate
- Ⓑ Brake
- ⓐ Swerve right
- ⓑ Swerve left
- Ⓐ Use gag
- Ⓑ Discard gag
- Ⓒ Turbo
- Ⓓ Rear view
- ↑/↓ Change view
- Pause

SPACE RACE

Publisher: Infogrames/Game type: Racing/Out: Now/Players: 1-2 (Full game 1-4)

THE GAME

Featuring the full roster of Warner Bros cartoon characters including Bugs Bunny, Wile E Coyote, Daffy Duck and Sylvester, *Space Race* is a *Mario Kart*-style racer that definitely doesn't take itself too seriously. Race round 12 tracks on rocket-powered sleds, picking up ludicrous power-ups that include fizzing bombs, portable holes for opponents to fall into, extendable boxing gloves and even pink elephants. *Gran Turismo* it ain't, but it's packed with all the zany humour you'd expect from a *Looney Tunes* game.

THE DEMO

Once loaded, press □, then ↑/↓ and Ⓣ to select either Race or Multiplayer mode. Whichever you opt for, the action takes place on the game's Pyramids Of Mars 1 level. Use ←/→ and Ⓣ to select either Bugs Bunny or Daffy Duck, then hit Ⓢ again to begin. You've got four minutes to make it to the finish line.

PLAY DEMO FOUR

THE CONTROLS

- L-stick - Steering
- Ⓐ Accelerate
- Ⓑ Brake
- Ⓒ Handbrake
- Ⓓ Rear-view
- ↑/↓ Change view
- Reset car

RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Publisher: SCI/Game type: Racing/Out: Now/Players: 1-2

THE GAME

This fully-licensed rallying title strikes a balance between realism and knockabout arcade thrills. Over 25 real-life cars feature in the game, including the Vauxhall Astra, Renault Megane and the new Mini Cooper. Set over six rallies and 36 stages in locations as diverse as the Welsh valleys and the sun-baked deserts of the African Sahara, *Rally Championship*'s cars are fully adjustable, with a realistic physics model for each motor.

THE DEMO

Once loaded, use ↑/↓ and Ⓣ to choose either a single-player or two-game, and then the same buttons again at the difficulty select screen. If you opt for single-player, Quick Race is the option available, and you get a spin around Glengap in bonnie Scotland in a Lancer Evo V. Once you've completed the race, you can play again, racing against a ghost of your car from the previous run. Two-player, meanwhile, is a three lap head-to-head race.

WORDS STEVE POLAK

V8

SUPERCARS RACE DRVIER

What's that you can hear ... ahh the sound of V8 thunder heading for PlayStation 2!

Publisher: Codemasters
Developer: Codemasters
Players: 1-2
Release: June



PREVIEW CONTENTS

- 10 V8 Supercars Race Driver**
No real race car fan is going to pass this one up.
- 14 Barbarian**
Multi-leveled beat-em-up mayhem. Should be a great *Tekken* alternative!
- 16 Spider-Man**
Exclusive hands-on preview of the next Spider-Man adventure.
- 18 Superman**
The second of our superhero previews this issue.
- 20 2002 FIFA World Cup**
What? Another *FIFA* game so soon? Yes, but this is special.
- 22 Rally Championship**
Yet another rally game graces the PS2. How will it stack up?
- 24 Matt Hoffman's Pro BMX 2**
Take another crack at pulling off tricks on a tiny, tiny bicycle.
- 25 Taz Wanted**
Another month, another *Looney Tunes* game. Now with added Taz.
- 26 Conflict Desert Storm**
Don the fatigues of a special forces hero and get blasting.
- 27 Gitaroo-Man**
Straight out of Japan. Totally mad. How whacky are games gonna get?!
- 28 Prisoner of War**
This time, it's YOUR great escape! Check out our hands-on preview.



Lou think you might be able to get a whiff of the smell of burning rubber and hear the roar of mighty V8s then give yourself a big elephant stamp Codemasters are putting the finishing touches to their much awaited V8 touring car game. In Australia, the game will be called *V8 Supercar Race Driver* but it will also be known as *DTM Race Driver* and *Toca Race Driver* in Germany and England respectively.

OPS2 were lucky enough to spend several hours with Gavin Raeburn, the producer of the game. What's even better was that we got to fang a few grunty V8s as well as their smaller engined European equivalents, around the hallowed patches of bitumen featured in the game.

This racer will let you hoon around seven of the Australian tracks, but there are also many European tracks and even a few yankee stadiums to be offered.

The first thing that strikes you about driving in this game is that it isn't a cheesy arcade effort, but a much more hearty meal. Don't expect to be able to stop on the proverbial dime, as your brakes are much more in tune with the edicts of Isaac Newton. This is a good thing after you get past the initial shock when, for the first time, you seriously overshoot a corner and go slamming into the armco.

However, once you get over this experience the world of superb physics and sheer speed that this game delivers is a very fun place to be. *V8 Supercars* is quite likely the game which will be remembered as the best tin top experience going this year. The digitally recreated circuits were impressive when it came to issues like detailed scenery, corner angle and placement and gradient.

The cars also look nothing short of stunning. All of the Australian and European team cars are present. The one, and most prominent exception is the famous Holden Racing Team HSV team. Skalley and his Iron mates have headed off to the Electronic Arts camp where they are currently making their own *V8 Supercars* racer.

Launching a V8 Falcon off the grid was a tricky and exciting experience. Wheelspin was only a twich of the toe away with the steering wheel and foot pedal combination we used. This wasn't at all a bad thing though, as the throttle was very progressive and made for a pleasant change from

the driving games where you hammer the gas from the get go and launch with no problems at all.

This fact does point quite clearly at the approach Codemasters have taken though, as *V8 Supercar Race Driver* is definitely a game that has pitched its tent in the simulation camp for those of you with an interest in these things. This is a good thing as the experience on offer is much deeper and more rewarding than you may initially expect, even if some of you will feel more like a pinball as you bounce off the barriers for the first few laps as you get a feel for the action.

The track we thrashed out the most was Adelaide and the stop start 90 degree corners, and the sweeping straights were superb to behold. The spectral effects were also wicked. The sun flare, tyre marks and other particle effects were the best *OPS2* has seen in a racer and there were even real gum trees - proof positive that Codemasters are serious about our formula and including true local flavour into the mix.

The damage model was also pretty impressive with the cars crashing into obstacles with bone jarring crunches.

The engines also sounded pretty damn close to the real thing. Different aural signatures were the order of the day, depending on which of the views was selected. The muffled growl of the engine you heard from the in cockpit view could have been easily mistaken for the sort of bellowing noise you'd catch if you were watching the telecast.

The other cars on the track also looked and sounded the goods. Zooming around Donington was a real challenge as the two litre tourers you were battling with jockeyed for position. Getting punted off or watching a sensational crash was also a part of the equation, and it was good to note that the computer controlled drivers were fallible.

It was also great to see that you could use the other cars to help you with braking. Skid marks and puffs of smoke from the cars ahead of you were enormously helpful in helping you determine how deep you could go under brakes.

The drivers include 23 of the 27 runners from the Australian championship and each driver (Larkham, Seton, Jones, Lowndes and those Commodore blokes) have their own behaviour profile based on their real world performance as well as the subjective assessment of their peers.

□



PREVIEW

V8 SUPERCARS RACE DRIVER



Gavin also revealed demonstrated the 'story' mode to us, which sees you competing in the championship as the unknown hero Ryan McKane. As Ryan, you have to work with a variety of teams and you compete against individual drivers in match races, which unlock new cars, as well as support your team by trying to achieve certain goals. For example if you begin the game you might start off driving for a lesser known team like the CAT outfit, and they will set you a realistic goal for the season. You might have to get a certain number of championship points or get onto the podium twice for the year. Having done this you then get the chance to test with another more fancied team and once on board are given more challenging objectives.

All of this will be presented with assistance from 3D environments which help flesh out the gameworld. There will be numerous segues where you are talking to your manager or other team mechanics. There is also an 'office screen' where you select all of the in game options. In the office there is a PC, a phone and even a clock which keeps the real time. Once you are getting ready to go for a hoon there is also a garage screen where you can fiddle with your cars' performance parameters and ready yourself for a day's testing. Some of the car settings open to changes include; gearing, downforce, brake-bias, antiroll, tyres and suspension.

V8 Supercar Driver also now features Oran Park and the much-loved Sandown circuits and the plain Calder track has been removed from the list of those available. Mt Panorama in Bathurst, including its infamous dipper, is also really well realised in the game.

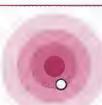
V8 Supercar Driver was a delight to drive. You could catch the car and hang out the tail convincingly and the steering rate and brake balance meant you had a challenge on your hands as the big heavy V8s had to be driven well and didn't feel too twitchy or like they were on rails. Steering with the throttle was a breeze. The sense of being on bitumen and having to push the limits of adhesion was very realistic and will prove to be one of its main strengths.

V8 fans everywhere have been begging for a game of this ilk and this is looking like the real deal. *V8 Supercar Driver* is looking like a monster effort and OPS2 can't wait to see the game when it is released locally on June the 28th. □



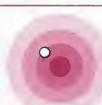
ON TARGET? V8 SUPERCAR

V8 lets you take on the V8 boys as a part of your own team with a real story developing as you are successful.



CONTROL

The braking, handling and throttle response will impress many.



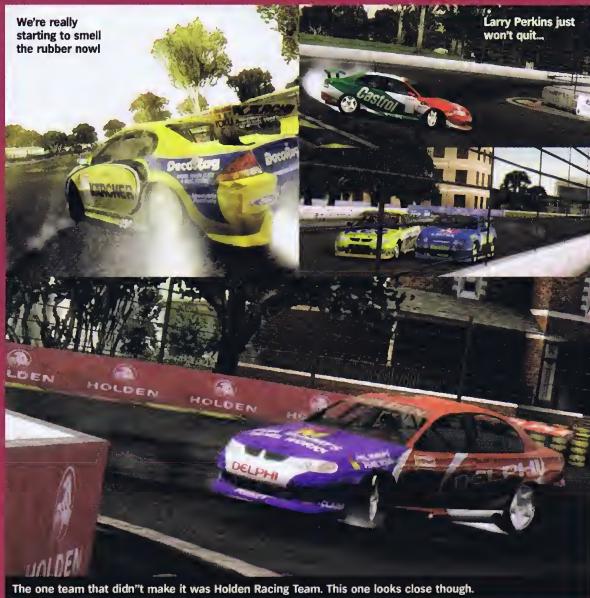
TRACKS

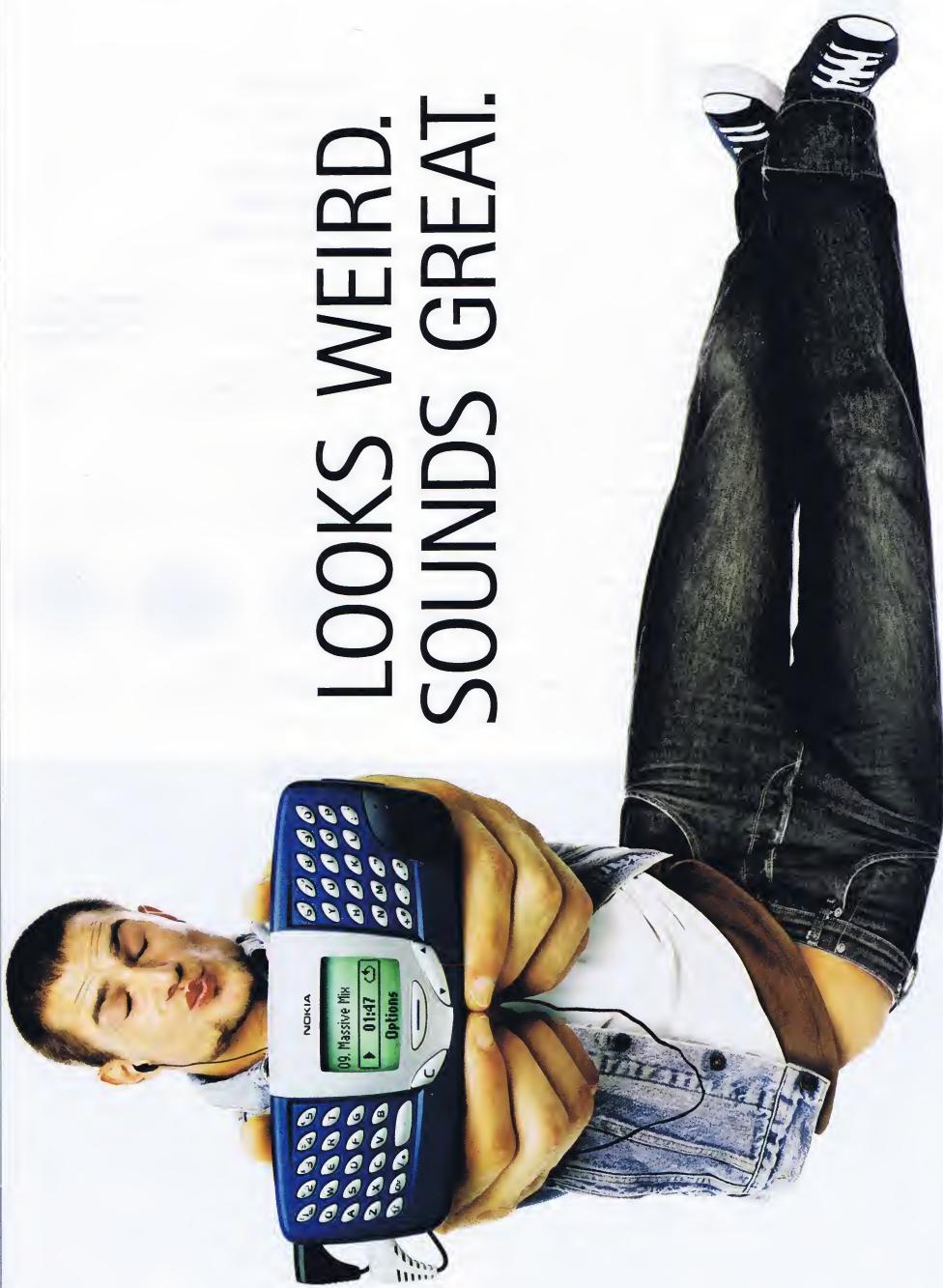
Finally someone got 'the dipper' at Bathurst right!



SOUND

If you have a decent stereo you will love the roar of the mighty V8s.





LOOKS WEIRD.
SOUNDS GREAT.

The New Nokia 5510 doesn't look much like a personal stereo. It really doesn't look like a phone, either. But it's both and a lot more: a text and games machine, WAP browser, FM radio and digital music player. Whichever way you look at it, we call it *human technology*.™ Join Club Nokia and get the most out of your Nokia 5510. Download ringing tones, fun picture messages, screen savers and new levels of Nokia games. Join free at www.nokia.com.au

WORDS DEREK MORTLOCK

BARBARIAN

Is *Barbarian* strong enough to muscle in on the over-populated beat-'em-up genre?

Publisher: Virgin/ Interplay
Developer: Saffire
Players: 1-4
Release: May 2002

Loud's be forgiven for not getting over-excited about *Barbarian* because, on first impressions, you appear to be looking at a game that will slowly sink far beneath the surface of gaming greatness. But first impressions can deceive. Taking a closer look at *Barbarian* – as we've now been able to do – reveals an enjoyable game that's more original than your average beat-'em-up.

Those first impressions we mentioned earlier concern a tired plot. You know the sort of thing – evil is taking over the land and there's only one person worthy enough to claim it back for the power of good. But this clichéd story line holds together a beat-'em-up that has all the subtlety of a horny rhino.

Beneath the surface, *Barbarian* appears to be an extremely well thought out game. You can choose to play in either a multiplayer arena (with up to an incredible eight fighters on-screen at once) or to work slowly through the many and varied single-player Quest modes. Like practically every other beat-'em-up out there, both modes give you a choice of character and battle arena. That, though, is where the similarities end.

Taking a leaf out of the books of both *Power Stone* for the Dreamcast and *Ehrgeiz* for the PSone, an excellent free-roaming arena-based beat-'em-up from Square, *Barbarian* sets its battles in huge multi-levelled playgrounds. It may appear simple enough to start with, but a swift right from your opponent and you'll be flying off a ledge and falling to another one several feet below. This can occur several times on each stage, with every platform offering a new set of hazards, interactive scenery and weapons. Practically everything in the game – from a 30-foot high pillar to skeletal remains – can be picked up and used to batter your opponents. The action is fast, furious and painfully unforgiving. There's a relatively small number of moves and combos for each of the ten characters, but this is an arcade fighter, forgoing the ten-string combos for zippy gameplay, magical special attacks and instant gratification. To simplify things further, a moves list can be viewed from the pause menu and a comprehensive tutorial is accessible from the main game screen.

One of the most interesting aspects of *Barbarian* is that, for the first time in a beat-'em-up, you can have up to eight characters battling it out at any one time – four human players and four computer-controlled 'thugs'. This leads to some incredibly frantic

Practically everything in the game ... can be picked up and used to batter your opponents

battles, as you desperately fling limbs in all directions in the hope of making contact. At the moment, even the easiest characters fight like martial arts masters – Saffire still has some tweaking and game balancing to do.

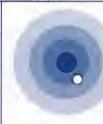
Relatively untested, *Barbarian* looks set to become an extremely playable and original PS2 beat-'em-up. It's one game we're looking forward to delving into more deeply over the next few weeks. □

ON TARGET? BARBARIAN

There's more than enough originality and fine gameplay to make *Barbarian* one to watch out for.



EASE
Just pick up and play. Some combos to learn, though.



LOOKS
No slouch here either. But, though, gameplay seems to be the real winner.



FUN
The kind of action-packed gaming PS2 was built for.

LEVEL HEADED

TAKING THE FORGOTTEN RUINS LEVEL AS A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF A MULTI-TIERED STAGE, HERE'S HOW THEY FIT TOGETHER...



All appears reasonably straightforward, until you bash through that pile of rocks at the back there...

...then you're down to the ruins below and a beautifully lit room. But, like before, there's another exit to find.

Your final destination and, as is often the case in this game, it's an area packed with bonus weapons. Here, they appear as trees and rocks.



Each character has their own special moves, complete with effects.



Anything can be used as a weapon – even a dead swordfish.



Size is no guarantee of strength...



Ah, the old giant horn trick...

LOOKS WEIRD.
SOUNDS GREAT.



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WORDS: MAX EVERINGHAM

SPIDER-MAN

Expectations are high for his first outing on PS2. Previous games have fallen just short of greatness, so is it third time lucky for Spidey?

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Treyarch
Players: 1
Release: June 2002

HE'S GOT MOVES

THERE ARE 30 NEW ATTACKS AND COMBOS TO BE LEARNED AS YOU WORK SPIDER-MAN THROUGH THE GAME. BEYOND THE USUAL PUNCHING AND KICKING, SPIDEY CAN LAUNCH ATTACKS WHILE STILL IN MID-AIR AND USE HIS ZIP LINE TO DROP IN ON ENEMIES WITH DEVASTATING EFFECT.



OPS2 LIKED THIS NEW ATTACK BEST. JUMP UP ON A BAD GUY'S SHOULDERS AS WE'RE JUST ABOUT TO HERE AND THEN DEAL OUT THE PUNISHMENT FROM ABOVE. NO EASY ESCAPE FROM THAT!



ALSO, JUST AS IN THE LAST GAME, THERE ARE "POWER-UP" ICONS SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE LEVELS THAT REFRESH OR AUGMENT OUR SUPERHERO'S ABILITIES.

- RED SPIDERS REPLENISH SPIDEY'S HEALTH.
- BLUE SPIDERS REPLENISH SPIDEY'S WEB METER.
- GREEN SPIDERS PROVIDE A WEB POWER-UP WHICH INCREASES DAMAGE FROM WEB.
- ATTACKS AND REDUCES THE CONSUMPTION OF WEB FLUID FOR A SHORT TIME.
- GOLD SPIDERS UNLOCK NEW COMBO MOVES.



What a Shocker.



Traditionally, comic to video game transitions have been greeted by the very demanding and discerning gaming community with little enthusiasm. Or at least heaps of enthusiasm until they get the disc in their hands, then it's quickly replaced by disdain. However, due to great atmosphere, authentic missions and characterisations and superbly-executed graphics, the Webbed Wonder's second outing on PlayStation, *Spider-Man 2: Enter Electro* was generally hailed as a huge success. It was also damn cool playing as Spidey. Third game, third developer in, Activision subsidiary Treyarch has taken the baton from Vicarious Visions, who created the second game, and run with it on to PS2. Due for release around the same time as the movie, in June, the result could be very exciting indeed, so we visited Activision HQ to get some hands-on play with the title.

Spider-Man's fans are legion, but just in case you're not one of them yet, here's the background. Peter Parker, orphan, student and apprentice photographer at the Daily Bugle newspaper is bitten by a radioactive spider while on a school trip. Winning an arm-wrestling contest alerts him to the fact that he's suddenly become possessed of super strength and he slowly also discovers spider-like agility and a handy "spider sense". Following a family tragedy, Peter decides to use his new-found powers in a positive, responsible way and becomes Spider-Man, determined to fight crime. His first challenge comes so soon, he hardly has time to sew up a nice flashy costume but, in any case, our hero is born.

OPS2's first impression on getting to grips with the game was that Spider-Man is very much more of the same. That's not a bad thing, of course, when the game was so good before. Better graphics are a given with the jump to the next-gen console, but what are the changes? Well, for a start, you can deal out a hell of a lot more punishment to the crims. By jumping on their shoulders, in fact, like an over-zealous Sophia and then punching them in the face until they fall over. And who says videogames aren't a positive influence on us all? The plot of the game follows that of the movie, but don't worry – with near simultaneous releases, you're unlikely to see one and thereby ruin the other. In fact, it's probably better to get down to the cinema, watch the movie, then buy

the game on the way home so you can re-live the experience to its fullest!

Maybe the greatest strength of the last *Spider-Man* game was the character design and a triumph for fanboys everywhere. For this game, the costumes have been designed by Alex Ross, the celebrated Marvel artist and there are loads of different outfits for players to unlock and try out on our man Parker. The big boss and your arch enemy this time around is the Green Goblin (played by Willem Dafoe in the movie) who you get to face in the final showdown after web-slinging your heroic way through the 22 levels of the game. And talking of slinging webs, you can now do it around corners and move up and down your web rather than simply in a straight line. In play, *OPS2* found that this translates to a far more manoeuvrable and zippy Spider-Man, although it's also a bit more disorientating to boot. Fighting has also been improved, with the ability to engage enemies in mid-air; if you're quick enough. You can even learn new moves and combos as you progress through the game. The new bad boys joining the Green Goblin include Shocker, and Vulture, who you get to face in the usual end-of-level showdowns.

Spider-Man is shaping up fantastically well and will no doubt cause a huge splash when it hits at the same time as the movie in June. If you've ever been disappointed in a 'Superhero' game, this should change things. □

ON TARGET? SPIDER-MAN

From what we've seen so far, *Spider-Man* has all the right moves to take the series to the next level.

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | | |
| GAMEPLAY Re-enacting Spidey's adventures is still loads of fun | VILLAINS Seeing how you cope with the bad guys is what it's all about | CONTROL Seems fine but could prove disorientating |

WILLEM DAFOE? WHAT THE?!?

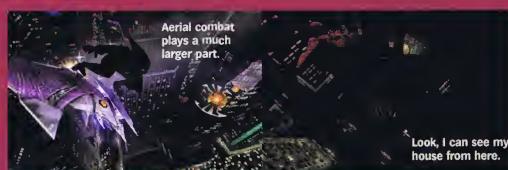
WELL WHY NOT? HE'S BEEN A VAMPIRE, AFTER ALL (*SHADOW OF THE VAMPIRE*) AND A FAIRLY UNHINGED DETECTIVE (*THE BOONDOCK SAINTS*) JUST TO NAME A COUPLE OF RECENT EXAMPLES, SO HE HAS THE RIGHT KIND OF EXPERIENCE!



ABOVE: Spidey can now carry people around.
BELOW: Check out the detail!



Harry's dad. Used to be a really nice bloke.



Aerial combat plays a much larger part.

Look, I can see my house from here.



Hey, where did my flying saucer go?

T

WORDS STEVE POLAK

SUPERMAN

Quick! Find a phone box!
The Man of Steel arrives
to shake up our PS2s!

Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Infogrames
Players: 1
Release: September 2002

The Man of Steel has finally gotten sick of the camp crusader Batman and the webbed weirdo Spiderman getting all of the action with their own games, and has decided to take them head on with his own effort. Superman is looking like being a very different kind of superhero game. The guy is

just so damn powerful, can fly anywhere, can burn things with his X-Ray eyes and is virtually unstoppable. This presents some challenges for the man behind the game, Rob Smith. In Rob's words: "We know we are making a game for the most powerful superhero of them all, Superman, so we have to make sure he can live up to his reputation in our game. So we have him tossing cars, breaking all sorts of stuff and taking on massive numbers of enemies at the same time. This is what really excites us about him, as Superman can legitimately get away with all sorts of feats and we don't need to offer an explanation. After all, he *is* Superman."

Rob has been working on the title for well over a year now and the game adopts the increasingly popular cel-shaded approach, which is appropriate as the game is based around the animated TV series brought to our screens by Warner Bros. Happily, the player has access to all of Superman's powers at the beginning of the game and they're pretty impressive. Superman can fly, of course, come crashing down on enemies with a bomb attack, form heat beams, use super speed to dodge things, belt anything, do a *Crash Bandicoot* style spin, and even blow enemies away with his super breath. Superman can even do cool things like rip the gun off a tank and use it against his enemies.

The game also sees you playing as Clark Kent in some stealth missions and the levels are, for the most part, huge and full of things to toss around or smash. The few levels we played in our exclusive hands-on play test saw Superman coming up against arch enemy Metallo and having to fight various robots. The music and speech were both very impressive, with *Superman* being played by Tim Daly (who you might remember from the *Fugitive*). Metallo is brought to life, voice-wise, by the man who has provided the voiceover for more than a few videogames, Malcolm McDowell. Rob and his team took like producing a very different superhero game and they are huge fans of the man of steel. One of the programmers even has a *Superman* tattoo - no kidding! We won't tell you where, though. □

ON TARGET? SUPERMAN

Our console is crying out for decent comic book games and Superman looks right on the money.



WEAPONS
What are you talking
about? Superman IS a
weapon!



ANIMATION

Cel-shaded and all the
better for it.



SOUND
Superb speech and
music faithful to the
shows.



The Matrix took you to a place you'd never been before
Now you can go even further

T H E

MATRIX REVISITED

PG

Matrix Revisited
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 - > Blocking Tapes
- > The True Followers
- > The Bathroom Fight and
Wet Wall

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Never-before-seen footage and more



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WORDS: LEE HART

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP

Made any plans for June this year? Cancel them. It's World Cup time and what better way to celebrate than with the official game of the tournament?

Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: EA Sports (Canada)
Players: 1-8
Release: April 19



Just five weeks, between now and 31 May – the start of the 2002 Korea Japan World Cup. To be even more minute, it's only a matter of 888 hours (or 53,280 minutes in total) until 8:30pm on 31 May – the time when France kicks off against Senegal in the opening match of the greatest sporting spectacle this planet has to offer. The countdown has started.

As you can probably tell, we take our soccer very seriously here and so, it seems, does EA Sports Canada. Having launched *FIFA 2002* last November, the development team was never going to be satisfied with just chucking in a *World Cup* tournament and releasing virtually the same game to coincide with this winter's soccer festival. Instead, numerous changes have been made to everything from the passing system to the animation, with the aim of giving *2002 FIFA World Cup* a better chance of taking on Konami's genius in *Pro Evolution Soccer*.

FIFA World Cup's most obvious new features are the purely cosmetic ones. See that big star hovering above the heads of players like Luis Figo and Zinedine Zidane? That'll be the Star Player icon, indicating that you're in control of a soccer maestro. The cream of the crop have been singled out so that their specific talents – Becks' crossing, Rivaldo's ball skills, Owen's pace, for example – have the same kind of match-winning effects as they do in reality. And it isn't just the Star Player icon that tells you (and the opposition) that one of the main men is in possession – there's also a nifty blurring effect accompanying their passes, shots and sprints.

Another immediately apparent enhancement is in the visuals. The authentic stadiums and strips have always been top notch in the *FIFA* games but now the same applies to the player likenesses. Admittedly, there's a certain zombified look about them (furrowed brows and cold, dead eyes) but the majority of players are extremely accurate – especially the more distinctive blokes like Paul Scholes.

The more subtle (and infinitely more important) improvements can be found in the actual gameplay. *FIFA 2002's* revolutionary change in the passing system – instead of automatically going to the feet of your nearest team mate, the strength of the passes varied massively depending on how long the long button was depressed – has now been refined and works much better. It's good riddance to foolproof, one-touch passing and a



warm welcome to passes into space, driven balls that bypass the nearest player, varled build-ups, misjudged kicks intercepted by the opposition – in other words, the kind of passing game you see in real soccer.

WORLD IN MOTION

The motion-captured animation has also been tweaked to great effect. It's fluid, realistic and without the 'must finish programmed animation despite the fact that the ball was lost three seconds ago' scenario that occasionally plagues *Pro Evolution Soccer*. Whether shielding the ball, taking to the air for a glorious overhead kick or stepping across a player to nick the ball away, movement is always seamless and totally convincing – not least in the fancy new ball-juggling moves.

In terms of options, *2002 FIFA World Cup* isn't as laden with features as is the norm in the series. For example, there are no club teams or competitions available, which is a bit disappointing. But what it does have is something no other soccer game on the market can boast – the official format, presentation and group games of the 2002 World Cup. You can take England successfully through the 'Group Of Death', go all glory boy on their asses with the samba-tastic Brazilians, or opt for a real challenge playing as one of the tournament's minnows. In fact, whatever happens in the World Cup this summer, you'll be able to re-enact it in EA's game.

As you'd expect, the epic scale and thrilling atmosphere of the World Cup have been captured superbly. No longer Fatboy Slim [guip], Chumbawumba [shudder] or Robbie Williams [aaargh] tormenting our ears with the intro tune, here it's a grand, classical score supplied by the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. There are 20 actual stadiums in Korea and Japan that have been modelled down to the tiniest detail. All the World Cup paraphernalia is in there, from the truly bizarre mascots to the official sponsors displayed on the advertising hoardings. And when you eventually emerge from the tunnel – greeted by roars from the crowd, a fanfare from the orchestra and a stunning purple-hued sky illuminating the pitch – we defy you not to get goosebumps.

In addition to the 32 qualified teams, another eight are available for friendly action. Oddly, Australia makes it into the competition and with squads of 40 players you can even second guess starting line-ups or choose a team no-one would ever consider.

Whether or not this mouth watering presentation and improved gameplay will be enough to knock *Pro Evolution Soccer* off its pedestal is another matter. Despite its new bells and whistles, *2002 FIFA World Cup* remains very much in the *FIFA* tradition and, as such, suffers from the same problems the series has always had. The default speed is a bit too sluggish and if you whack the speed up to Very Fast it's headless chicken time (the Fast setting is your best bet). It's still too easy to score – you can simply leg it down field from the kick off, enter the box from that trusty diagonal sweet spot and blast your shot across the keeper. And no matter how authentic it is, the gameplay can't match *Pro Evo*'s incredible realism – Konami's game actually feels like soccer.

But then, who said there can be only one type of soccer game? Take the racing genre, for example. If you want simulation you go for *Gran Turismo 3: A-spec*; if you prefer more arcade-style larks then *Burnout* is probably for you. They're both great titles, both offer contrasting versions of the same concept and both demand to be in your collection.

Exactly the same can be said for *Pro Evolution Soccer* and *FIFA*. Konami's classic is the benchmark in terms of realism, while *2002 FIFA World Cup* is poised to grab the glory for pick-up-and-play soccer action. There's plenty of room for both games. □

ON TARGET?

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP

With the almighty opposition that is *Pro Evolution Soccer*, can EA's new star prove itself a World Cup hero this summer?

| GAMEPLAY | LIKENESS | MASCOTS |
|--|--|--|
| No great revolution but some notable enhancements. | Very accurate, albeit with more than a hint of the undead. | A huge pink fella lurking near the corner flag. Scary. |



Players with Mad Skilz™ are depicted with icons over their heads.



WORDS RICHIE YOUNG

RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Who ever thought that sliding through mud would get better with time?

Publisher: Warthog
Developer: SCI
Players: 1-4
Release: May 3

Fast becoming the dominant driving style among PlayStation racers, gamers can look forward to an abundance of rally games vying for attention. To date, we've already seen the likes of *WRC* and the stages within *GT 3*, but with the imminent release of *V-Rally 3* and the forthcoming *Colin McRae Rally 3*, we're about to be spoilt for choice.

In some respects *Rally Championship* has snuck up on us, and hasn't received the same fanfare ahead of release that *V-Rally 3* and *CMR 3* have received. Until all three completed versions go toe to toe for comparison, it's impossible to declare a winner. *OPS2* can confirm however, that the preview build of *Rally Championship* was indeed very strong, and from what SCI have said, it's bound to get much better once the final features have been set in place.

OPS2 played an uncompleted build, that only had single player racing available. It looked the goods, and we were particularly impressed with the frame rate and background detail. As backgrounds often include a lot of flora, fauna and mountains and also move about so much in rally games, they often fall prey to 'pop up', but there was absolutely no hint of that here. Everything moved smoothly as well, hinting at the quality resources put into development.

If anything, it was foreground resolution that could have done with some sharpening. The cars look realistic, but even if only slightly, sometimes feel as though they're turning on a skew. Environments and track surfaces vary with each country and each does have a distinctly different feel.

Mud and water effects are a treat and consequently slow you down through puddles. However slight, this is a neat gimmick that adds to the realism and fun. The crux of the game is similar to *GT 3*. While it's not as thoroughly comprehensive as *GT 3*, there is a decent reward system of cash - that allows you to buy cars and compete in various rally grades.

Potentially the main strength of *Rally Championship* could capitalise on its four-player racing. If they can optimise frame rates to support it, then it will certainly be a winner in this respect over its rivals.

Expect 29 officially licensed cars, sophisticated car damage, and set-up options in the finished version to boot. □

Potentially the main strength that *Rally Championship* could capitalise on is four-player racing

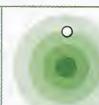
ON TARGET P RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

It's as difficult as ever in making an informed choice about which rally game will be worth shelling for. So how's this one really stacking up?



GRAPHICS

Above average, but nothing spectacular. Sharpen it up!



DRIVER REVIVER

Unfortunately, no real driver likenesses from the WRC appear.



WEIGHTY WONDERS

Each car has a distinct feel and seem to have 'real' weight.



Are they ever going to make this available in red?

The French aren't bad at making rally machines.



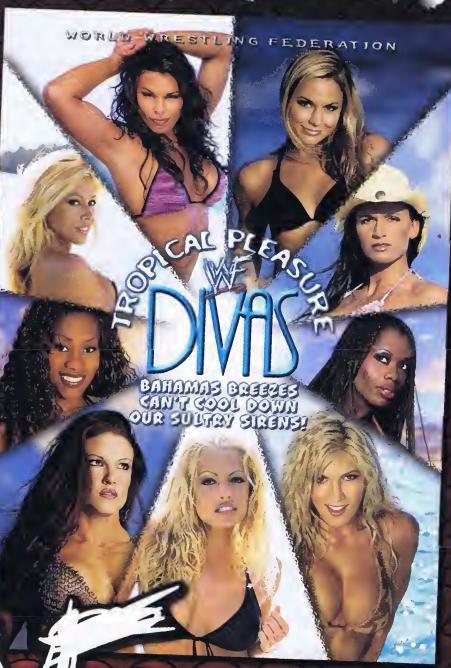
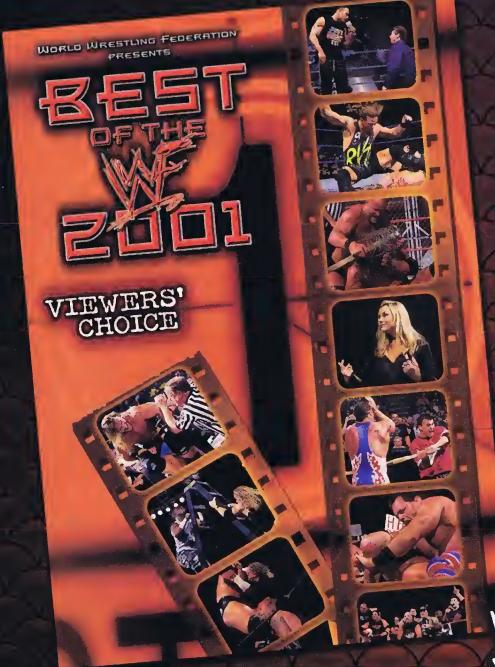
The driver just isn't coffee all over himself.

This team spend most of their budget on tyres.

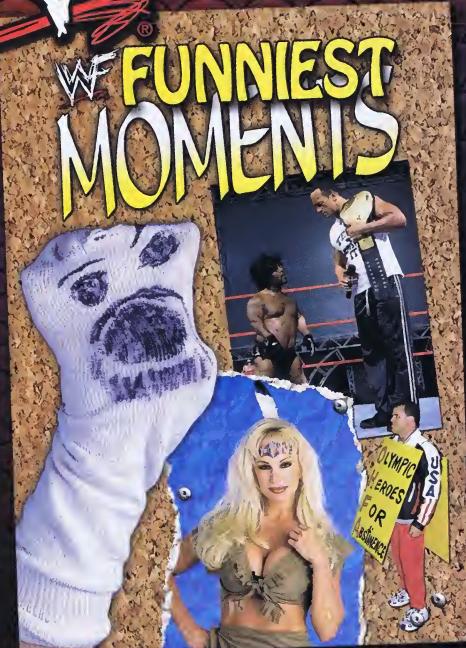
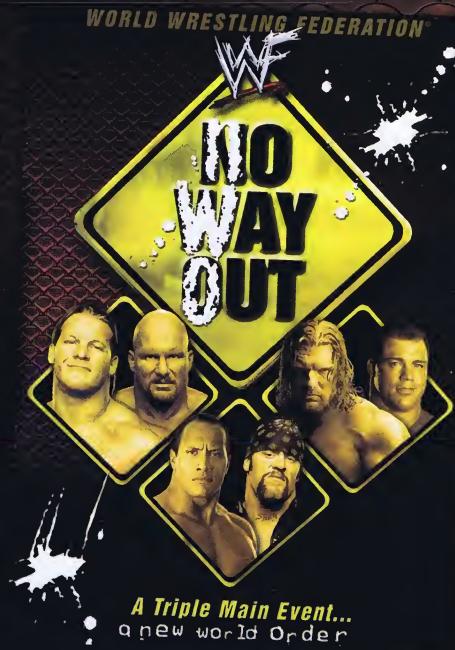


Various surface types affect your car's momentum.





SMELL WHAT THE WE IS COOKIN'!



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MAT HOFFMAN PRO BMX 2

This hotly anticipated title shows that Rainbow Studios haven't been just lazing around, spinning their wheels

Publisher: Activision 2
Developer: Rainbow Studios
Players: 1-2
Release: TBC

Just as Dave Mirra and Mat Hoffman regularly duke it out in BMX competitions across the USA so too do the titles bearing their names battle it out for video game supremacy. The first Dave Mirra title appeared on the PSOne and reigned supreme until Mat Hoffman appeared on the scene. On the PS2, Dave Mirra 2 was once again first out of the blocks with *Hoffman 2* lagging months behind. Now that *Hoffman 2* is approaching release, the question is whether it can again topple Mirra from the top perch. Well, let's just say that the signs are looking ominous for history to repeat itself. Either way, it's gamers who reap the ultimate benefit from the rivalry between these two excellent franchises.

Using the original Mat Hoffman as a blueprint, and with lessons learnt from three hugely successful *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* games, you would have thought that only a minor catastrophe could have prevented Activision from adding another top-notch title to their extreme sports lineup. Although the preview code OPS2 received was extremely unstable (crashing five times in 10 minutes) we saw enough of the game to report that to date, no such minor catastrophe has materialized. *Mat Hoffman 2* is looking mighty fine in every respect.

With the game being all about pulling off as many different tricks as possible, plenty of time has been spent in making sure that the animation for the vast array of tricks is nice and smooth. In fact, the animation for some of the more spectacular tricks has to be seen to be believed, surpassing even those found in *Tony Hawk 3*. Less time seems to have been spent on general movement around levels as the animation was a little too jerky for a product that's close to completion. No doubt this will all be tidied up before final release so that everything links up nicely. Collision detection also needs some work as there were frequent instances of bike tyres disappearing into ramps and being able to ride through parts of walls. Otherwise, the physics engine appeared solid.

Rainbow Studios appears to have nailed the control system, which is spot on and responsive down to the slightest touch. Manoeuvring your bike around and being able to land it on lips and rails to pull off grinds is simplicity itself. The introduction of plenty of new freestyle and manual moves means that you can now link into and out of the vert sections of levels. Combine this

with well-designed levels that allow you to find plenty of lines means that insane combos will be order of the day. Linking together a few combos is easy enough but pulling together the mega, massive points combos requires plenty of practice and skill. In short, the controls appear to be perfectly balanced, and able to distinguish the novice from the BMX genius.

With rocking music being such an important feature of extreme sports games these days, you'll be glad to know that Rainbow Studios has assembled an impressive lineup of talent. Songs from the likes of the Prodigy, Nickelback, the Deftones and Blink 182 are featured with the ability to customize tunes and playlists as you go about shredding each arena.

One new feature that has sparked our interest is an auto-camera feature that fires off a few quick snaps when you're in the midst of a massive air or pulling off a special trick. The screenshots are then stored in a scrapbook which you can later play around with to your heart's content to create magazine-style pics of your feats.

Home-made courses built using the create-a-level mode look professional rather than amateurish as plenty of interactive elements are automatically added. Big fat ticks of approval can be placed next to virtually every aspect of *Mat Hoffman 2*. Overall, its shaping up very nicely and deserving of a "can't wait" tag. □

ON TARGET? MAT HOFFMAN PRO BMX 2

For extreme sports fans, and BMX nuts in particular, the drool factor for *Mat Hoffman 2* is high.

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | |
| GRAPHICS Looking a bit drab at the moment; plenty of detail to be added, | GORE FACTOR We want to see plenty of blood splatters for those monster balls | INTERACTIVITY Levels are filled with interactive characters and features, but we still want more |



Christopher Reeve has absolutely nothing on this guy. Go bruddah!



'Wheellies' are like 'manuals' in THPS3.



"Look mum, no hands! Look mum, no teeth!" The action gets pretty extreme when you're confident...

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AUSTRALIA

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PlayStation®2

**PC
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THE ONLY OFFICIAL V8 SUPERCAR GAME



PREVIEW
TAZ WANTED



If you know only six episodes of the original Warner Brothers cartoons featured Taz's exploits? If it wasn't for those original six cartoons, Taz would simply not even exist and the guys at Blitz Games in the UK would look like a right bunch of wallies. Thankfully, this is not the case and instead Blitz are putting the finishing touches on *Taz Wanted*, a comic and colourful game where you have to control the energetic marsupial as he tries to escape from Yosemite Sam's zoo, rescue the love Lady Taz and wreck all of Sam's businesses.

You control the furious fury one as he tries to get out of jail, and then generally piss off Yosemite Sam. Finding and destroying wanted posters pledging a reward for your capture is also a major part of the challenge – hence the name of the game. Jon Cartwright from Blitz games is pretty stoked about finishing the game: “We’re fans of the *Looney Tunes* look and feel and we think we have come up with something which is colourful, different and fun. Taz can pretty much eat or destroy any of the objects he comes across, which we got a real laugh out of. We have also added in some special attacks.”

These are rather cool and fans of the fictitious ACME glzmo company will get a chuckle as Taz jumps into a telephone booth and changes costume *Superman*-style. There were some really funny costumed Taz Incarnations too, each with their own unique attacks. The best of these was the DJ Taz who did some cool trick mixing.

There are also some great enemies, like the bears who use Taz as a punching bag. He can also let rip with a big trouser trumpet attack and his soda burp is awesome. There are also some funny gameplay elements, like a weird tennis game where Taz and a monster take turns scaring an elephant. If you're a Looney Tooner, *Taz Wanted* should be high up on your 'must-have' list. □

ON TARGET
TAZ WANTED

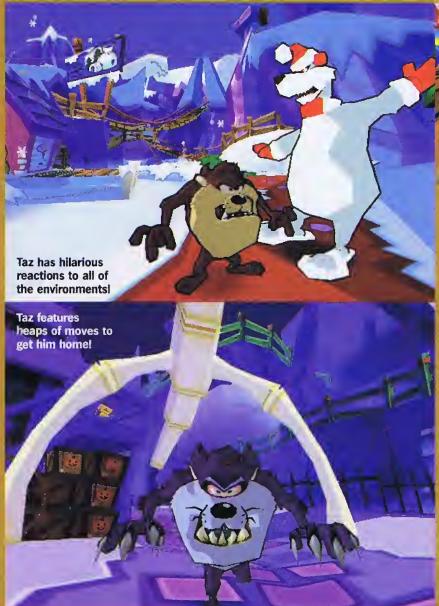
If it's cartoon-based platforming you're after, *Taz* could be just the ticket. Fans of the wonder from down under will appreciate this one.



Bite people on the bum and get away with it. Isn't life grand? .

Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Blitz Games
Players: 1-2
Release: May 31

Bite people on the bum and get away with it. Isn't life grand? .





WORDS STEVE POLK

CONFlict: DESERT STORM

This ain't no storm in a teacup; more like the wide, wild deserts of Kuwait and Iraq.

Publisher: Ozisoft
Developer: Pivotal
Players: 1-2
Release: July 2002



The radio will help you keep in touch with your mates.



If you have this viewpoint, it might be time to run.



Ah good, here comes the beer

Desert Storm is one of the best kept secrets in the games industry. This tactical combat action offering sees you fighting against the Iraqi forces as you play through a number of missions loosely based on the Gulf War conflict. The satisfying thing about *Desert Storm* is that the game sees you controlling a team of specialist soldiers. You start off as a lone warrior, but then rescue your mates and this makes it easier to get into the action.

Having played through a number of levels, the prognosis is very promising. Switching between members of your team and using the many weapons at your disposal is a cinch. The narrative is well driven by what happens during the game, too. In the very first mission, your main challenge is to rescue your sniper who has been captured by the enemy. To do this, you have to avoid Iraqi armour and sneak under a bridge controlled by the enemy. There were also vehicles you could commandeer and planting explosives to destroy a bridge was a particularly delightful pleasure.

The game will begin with you playing as just one member of the team - a chap called Bradley. You'll be able to play as either British SAS or US Delta Force soldiers and each have different attributes. The SAS team members have the ability to heal themselves and the Delta Force troops are better with handguns, so there are tactical choices to be made.

It is also interesting to note that all objects in the game are calculated using the physics engine and to prove this point while demonstrating the game, the guys shot down some birds flying overhead! After the initial missions where you rescue your comrades, you also get on with the nitty gritty of winning the war. Destroying SCUD launchers, taking out enemy air defences and saving the Emir of Kuwait are some of the challenges you face and each mission has different objectives with quite varied environments. The variety of the game missions are a huge strength!

The 3D surround sound system which complements the gameplay also makes for some fantastic sound effects as bullets whiz past your head. The explosion effects were also particularly brilliant with the rocket and grenade attacks being punctuated by some amazing particle effects.

Another feature which impressed *OPS2* was the way *Desert Storm* not only let you send your troops to various waypoints easily

After the initial missions where you rescue your comrades, you get on with the nitty gritty of winning the war

with the touch of a button (and without having to revert to a map screen), but you could determine which way your troops would face. This was great for setting up ambush zones. You could even determine if your men would fire at will (by 'going loud') or wait until you began to fire. This feature was way cooler than it sounded, as the killing zone opportunities were many.

The ability to snap between first person view (for firing) and third person view (for firing on the move or running) was a good thing as it helped give you a sense of flexibility in terms of the way you tackled each level. *Conflict: Desert Storm* is already high on the 'most anticipated' list here at *OPS2*. □

ON TARGET? CONFLICT: DESERT STORM

Fight the Gulf War in full 3D with your team of highly trained special forces troops.

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | | |
| ATMOSPHERE Delivers lots of tension as you infiltrate massive enemy bases. | STRATEGY Engaging strategic play as you coordinate your team's attacks. | CONTROL A lot of control over your troops via a very simple interface. |



PREVIEW

Gitaroo Man

WORDS ERIC BRATCHER

GITAROO MAN

If PaRappa is Eminem and Ulala is Kylie, prepare to meet... Brian May?

Publisher: THQ
Developer: KOEI
Players: 1-4
Release Date: June 2002

Rhythym action games have been enjoying something of a renaissance of late, with new titles like Rez and Sony's Frequency joining the latest entries in established franchises like *PaRappa the Rapper*, *Space Channel 5* and *Dancing Stage*. But even intimate knowledge of all of these titles is unlikely to prepare you for the enthusiastically bizarre, undeniably compelling gaming experience that is *Gitaroo-Man*.

Like *PaRappa* and SC5, *Gitaroo-Man* strives to fuse interesting music with creative art design, peculiar story lines and unique personalities. The main character is a pick-on and mostly pathetic young lad who goes by the unfortunate name of U-1 (undoubtedly the cause of at least some of his grief). Luckily for U-1's low life, his talking dog reveals to him that he also has a stunning alter ego - Gitaroo-Man, an intergalactic super hero, equal parts Ultraman and Eddie Van Halen, whose lightning-spewing guitar (or rather, gitaroo) is the bane of evil everywhere.

Gameplay in *Gitaroo-Man* is cleverly broken up into two distinct modes. The first of these is a defensive mode in which button symbols move from the edges to the centre of the screen and a press of the corresponding button enables Gitaroo-Man to dodge the attack. Then it's your turn to go on the offensive – as a twisting line meanders around the screen, you must use the left analogue stick to trace its direction, pressing the correct button at key moments to launch lightning bolts at the enemy. This cycle continues until one of the combatant's life bars is depleted. It sounds unwieldy on paper but it quickly feels natural.

Then, of course, there's the music – the lifeblood of any rhythm action game. Not only is it quite good, but it also switches styles with lunatic abandon, running the gamut from J-pop to dub to arena rock without missing a beat. This aural schizophrenia is complemented by the game's erratic story line, which careens wildly from one other worldly situation to another. One moment Gitaroo-Man is fending off a fleet of UFOs; the next, he's facing off against a fat, swamp-dwelling jazz trumpeter in a bee suit. Then, after an escape from a giant mechanical shark accompanied by breakneck drum 'n' bass, he attempts to woo the lady of his dreams with a fireside ballad before blasting off to the moon for some giant mecha low-gravity battling. We don't recommend trying to make sense of it all.

Gitaroo-Man has all the hallmarks of a sleeper hit

Gitaroo-Man has all the hallmarks of a sleeper hit. True, rhythm action games are always niche titles and this one is quirky to the point of extreme esoterica. Also, the Japanese version was brutally difficult, so all but the most masochistic should hope the Australian release leans more in the direction of the notably easier North American version. If all of these issues are addressed, gamers can look forward a fresh game in a new ilk. Still, the game's unique personality looks to easily outweigh these shortcomings and has us tuning up our guitars in anticipation. □

ON TARGET? GITAROO-MAN

The freshest, most engaging, innovative rhythm action game since *Samba De Amigo*. But do enough gamers care?



GRAPHICS

Hyperactive creative art design. Always something to see.



MUSIC

Top notch. Loads of variety – each song is pleasingly unique.



LONGEVITY

Longer legs than *PaRappa* with its abundance of levels.



Gitaroo-Man's interface is in the centre of the screen.

You carry out both defensive and attacking moves in the game.



The graphics are saturated with colour and psychedelia.

Attack



Gitaroo-Man seals victory with a pyrotechnic finishing blow.

PRISONER OF WAR

WORDS STEVE POLK

Even without Sergeant Schultz this game looks like getting through the wire and legging it down the road.

Publisher: Codemasters
Developer: Codemasters
Players: 1
Release: July 2002

The Second World War has inspired a great tradition of prisoner of war movies and even comical TV series' like *Hogan's Heroes*. However, there haven't been any prison camp games - until now, that is. *Prisoner of War* is a very unusual game that sees you pulling on the fatigues of an airman who has been shot down and finds himself an unwilling guest of the Luftwaffe in a prison camp. The game is daringly different in that gunplay isn't a part of the formula. This makes for a very believable prisoners' world. Also you must be in bed at night, be in line for roll call and attend the mess hall at meal times. This helps give you a sense of excitement when you do manage to sneak about the place like a kid on the loose at a school camp.

While playing the game, it's cool to watch the other prisoners going about their business. You really get the impression this is a genuine POW camp. Other prisoners even have the brains to send messages to each other and communicate on a whole range of issues. If you do something right or wrong the 'word' will get out. Finding the right people to speak to will be half the challenge as early on in the game you will have to earn the trust of your fellow prisoners - you might be a German spy after all.

Having played a pre-release demo of the game, OPS2 noticed that the German guards can be quite vigilant. They are on alert and you can see how much noise you're making by looking at the translucent vibration waves you send out. Running, walking and crouching make different degrees of noise so watch out!

It's also interesting how *Prisoner of War* penalises you for getting caught breaking the rules. Once a guard spots you legging it through a 'verbotten' area, they will chase you and shoot you down. However, you won't die in *Prisoner of War*. Instead, you'll be injured, taken to the infirmary and then have to spend some time in solitary. If you lose too much time you won't be able to get out of the camp in time to complete your mission.

Prisoner of War will also see you acquiring various skills which will be useful in distracting enemy guards. Stone throwing is an art which you'll master and you'll also don disguises that even include enemy uniforms!

Prisoner of War looks like being fun and beyond the lurking, there's also a more involved plot as you try to discover secret German technology and help destroy it. □

It's cool to watch the other prisoners going about their business

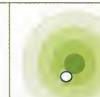
ON TARGET? PRISONER OF WAR

The sense of excitement you get from sneaking about the place in a very hostile environment is what this game is all about!



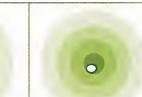
LEVELS

Prisoners and guards all have specific behaviour profiles.



GAMEPLAY

You have to use something other than a gun to solve your problems here.



ORIGINALITY

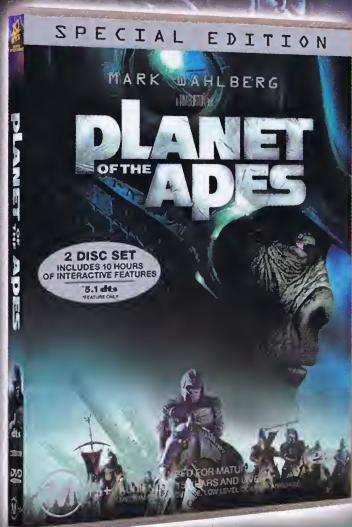
Very innovative - and using stones to distract guards is also huge fun!



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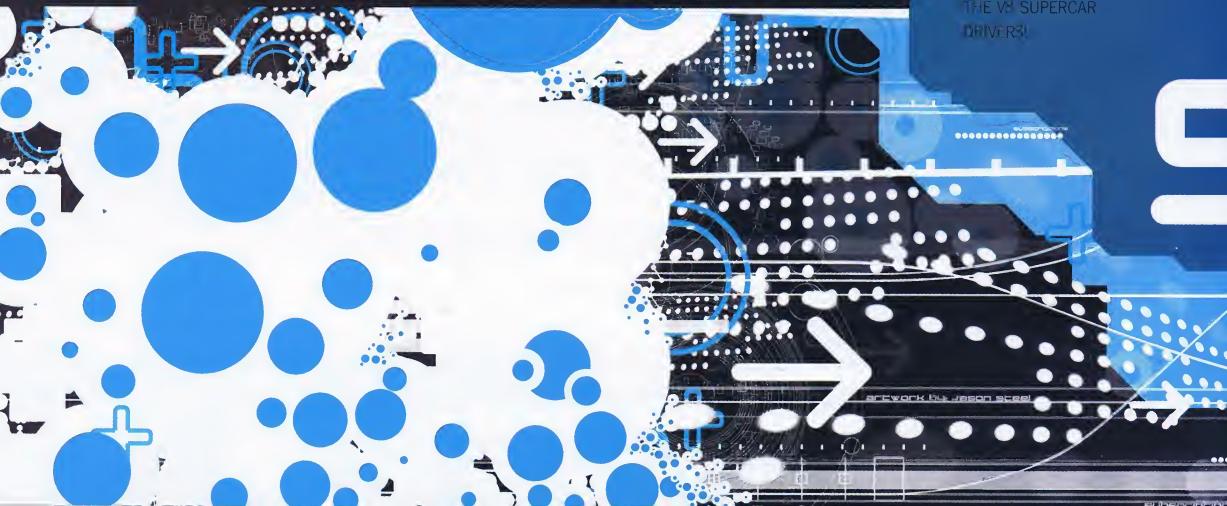


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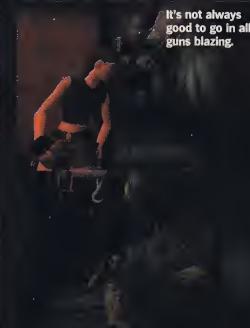
| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Broken Sword: The Sleeping Dragon | 33 |
| RoboCop | 34 |
| Capcom vs SNK Pro | 35 |
| The Thing | 36 |
| Star Wars: Bounty Hunter | 37 |
| Malice | 38 |
| Pro Evolution Soccer 27 | 40 |

SPY

EDITED BY MAX EVERINGHAM

TOMB RAIDER: ANGEL OF DARKNESS

Want to see more of Lara Croft? Only on PS2: The Lara appreciation club goes exclusive!



It's not always
good to go in all
guns blazing.

The new Lara
looks meaner.

A REALLY DECENT SEQUEL TO the epoch-making adventures of lovely Lara in *Tomb Raider* has been a long, long time coming. Dogged by uninspired and often infuriating "remakes" to what was, at the time, a ground-breaking action adventure game, Lara has had a bit of a bum deal lately. That's all set to change, however, with her latest foraging expedition, *Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness*. Out at the end of this year, *TRAOD* is both a step forward and a step back. Forward in terms of graphics and interactivity and backwards in terms of Lara returning more to the gritty, realistic vision of her original character's work. After all, breaking into architecturally significant sites and stealing stuff is hardly the behaviour of the squeaky-clean heroine we've come to know, is it? The new game brings new abilities, new athleticism and, importantly, more complex character involvement to complement the new, darker storyline. Operations Director at Core

Design Adrian Smith promises that Lara will "have some tough moral choices to make", with far less cut-and-dried scenarios apparently presenting themselves to our fearless explorer. Much like real life, then.

Built from the ground up, the new game engine basically reinvents the game, creating extremely detailed environments and boosting Lara's already impressive physique with 10 times more polygons (from 500 to 5,000)! How can that be bad? Forsaking the usual tomb raiding exploits for a while, Lara is tasked with chasing down a 14th century work of art called the Obscura Paintings. Judging from the rest of the back story, there's going to be a lot more nastiness for the lovely, toolled-up Lara to sort out.

But perhaps the best news for PlayStation 2 owners is that the new game will be exclusively available on their machine. You won't see this on any other console, folks! □ ME



BROKEN SWORD: THE SLEEPING DRAGON

One of the best adventure game series in the world comes to PlayStation 2.

DON'T EVER LET IT BE said we don't bring you the news early enough. Announcing a game that won't arrive until Q3, 2003 – that's 2003! Revolution Software is bringing this humorous and intelligent adventure game to PS2.

Just in case you're one of those non-adventuring heathens and didn't know, *Broken Sword* is Europe's most successful adventure game franchise ever, pitching main characters George Stobart and Nico Collard into a headlong tumble through deeply mysterious and labyrinthine plots that always seem to have something to do with dastardly secret societies and odd-looking totems. Cartoony in design but unequivocally adult, *Broken Sword's* locations are also always suitably exotic, including darkest Congo and Egypt, amongst other places.

Broken Sword's storylines pull few punches, with the player just getting used to a character only for him or her to fall down stone dead or get horribly mangled by some unexpected evil-doing. Kicking off in Paris, another ancient conspiracy theory is threatening to blow away the French capital's sophisticated veneer and you are just the person to investigate. In keeping with the complex story, Revolution Software has deliberately grifted (a new OPS2 word) the look of

the game, with extra realism conveyed by means of a real-time character animation system, so characters' body language, lip movements and facial expressions are totally convincing.

Play in *Broken Sword* centres on exploration and object manipulation. In many games, this often means picking up absolutely everything and then tying it on every object you encounter just in case something works. *Broken Sword*, however, is smarter than that, with solutions often presenting themselves if the player pays attention and just... thinks... enough.

Another new game play element is the "AE", or Action Event sequences. Reminiscent of the "QTE" events in Sega's seminal *Shenmue* games, the AE sequences are triggered only in certain situations – such as fights or chases – and the player will be required to hit the right buttons at the right time to succeed and progress to the next sequence. This feature, experience tells OPS2, could go either way: fingers crossed for that, then.

Not for the impatient, this kind of exploration game can provide an incredibly rich and satisfying experience. At OPS2 we love our adventure games and it's a genre the PS2 has been seriously lacking recently. Bravo Revolution Software and vive la France! □ ME



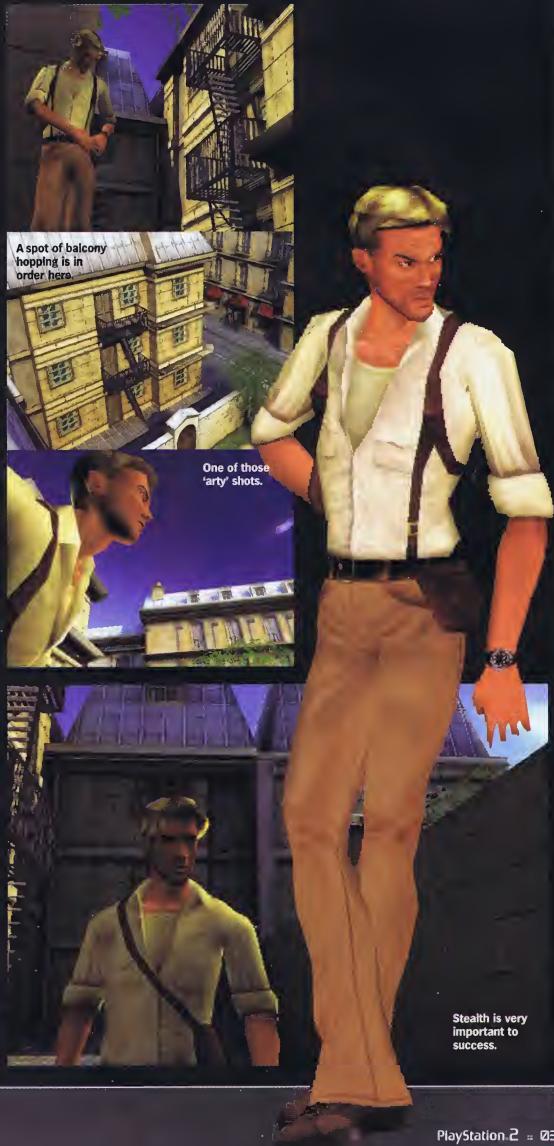
Players will have to control both George...



...and Nico as the game switches between them.

FACIAL EXPRESSIONS!!

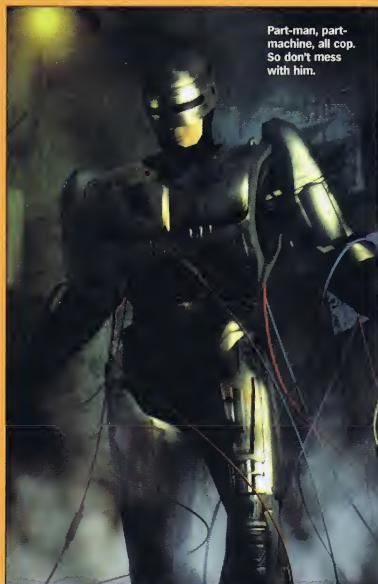
THIS IS OUR MAN GEORGE, AND, THANKS TO SOME SERIOUSLY SLINKY FACIAL ANIMATION SYSTEM THAT REVOLUTION HAS COOKED UP, PLAYERS WILL SEE HIM REACT TO EVENTS IN THE GAME WITH GREAT REALISM.



A spot of balcony hopping is in order here.

One of those 'arty' shots.

Stealth is very important to success.



A LOT OF COP

RoboCop returns to protect the innocent, via Titus Interactive, after a nine year hiatus.

VIOLENT POLICE SERIES

RoboCop, first conceived by exploitation director extraordinaire Paul Verhoeven, is being made for PS2 by Titus Interactive. Famous initially for its graphic opening scene in which policeman Murphy is literally blown to pieces in the course of duty, the story centres on his reconstruction as a cyborg cop, described in the film's tagline as "The future of law enforcement."

The PS2 game has been designed as a first-person shooter in which you take on the role of RoboCop. The plot draws from each of the three MGM movies but has

its own original story line involving a mission to uncover a plot by the OCP Corporation to wipe out all cyborgs – including RoboCop. The developer has revealed there will be 15 levels set in the crime-addled Motor City of Detroit. Throughout these levels the player is required to explore the inner-city slums and high rise metropolis, dispensing justice on anyone prepared to stand in their way.

In keeping with its cinematic origins, a cinematic script has been prepared to lead players through the game and visual effects such as lightning, smoke and fog will

provide the bleak, yet futuristic atmosphere. However, it's likely that most FPS fans will be more interested in the array of high-tech weaponry on offer. RoboCop becomes one in a long line of resurrected movie licences already reported in this issue including *The Thing* and *Die Hard*. Let's hope that Titus' game and others like it are able to add something extra and memorable to the films themselves. □ GW

"*RoboCop* is out at the end of August and will be distributed by Interplay.



In-game screens look promising.

THE JOURNEY OF THE KIJANA

Have PS2, will travel around the world in a small boat...

IF YOU WERE KICKING AROUND the National Maritime Museum down at Darling Harbour about a month ago, you may well have seen big crowds gathering around Jamie Durie from *Backyard Blitz* and a bunch of kids on a yacht. As it happened on Sunday March 24, solo yachtsman adventurer Jesse Martin and four other equally intrepid and youthful crew members set off from the museum on a journey that will last two years and take them to around the globe following the old Spice Routes. Dubbed "The Journey of Kijana" (Kijana is Swahili for "young people"), the trip is Jesse Martin's brainchild and has been two years in the making. The idea, which the crew expounded at the Launch event proper in Sydney, is to show that with the right get-up-and-go attitude, hard work and support from loads of interested sponsors, anyone can achieve their dreams. And, presumably, a healthy dose of cash from your wealthy, understanding parents.

Thanks to SCE Australia, the Kijana crew have a PS2 and a load of games to help relieve the boredom of the voyage and, apparently, to settle disputes that break out on board during the trip. Thanks also to sponsors like Apple and Telstra, the kids will be broadcasting their progress online at www.kijana.net, as well as turning the whole thing into a 13-part television series. □ ME



GT CONCEPT AUSTRALIA BOUND

Drive into the future with Sony's "GT3 Lite".

GT CONCEPT, the 'add-on' to *Gran Turismo 3* where you get to motor around the place in bizarre, 'only in Japan' concept cars, is coming to Australia this winter. With a simplified front end and chugging 80 new street, rally and funky hybrid cards into the mix, *GT Concept* went down a storm in Japan and should provide around 30 more hours of driving fun for all you racing nuts out there. Better still, the PAL version will come with totally exclusive content – namely, a bunch of European, Korean and American concept

cars and final production vehicles. The five tracks in *GT Concept* are taken from *GT3* and the original games (Autumn Ring, Mid-Field, Swiss Alps, Tahiti Maze and Tokyo R246) and the graphics are enhanced in this version, too. *GT3* fans will love it because they're going to get a special 'behind-the-scenes' insight into car production and EVERYONE will love the special, bargain price tag. Come on now, what other game lets you scream around a track in the Toyota Pod? □ ME

The Toyota Pod.
You know you
want it.





RATCHET AND CLANK

Robby the robot goes AWOL in Sony's latest platformer.

DEVELOPED BY INSOMNIAC GAMES. the people who brought us the three excellent *Spyro the Dragon* romps on PlayStation, *Ratchet & Clank* is a weapons-based action/platformer game with, as the title suggests, a distinctly industrial, metallic theme. Thankfully, despite having one of the worst websites in history, Insomniac are actually a very talented bunch of creative folk who know how to put a solid game together, and, in

a bit of a departure from the frolics of our beloved fire-breather, have built *Ratchet & Clank* around the game's weapons. There are supposedly tonnes of destruction-dealing contraptions to wield, so players will be able to scoot around the sci-fi-themed levels creating absolute mayhem. Sony has yet to specify a release date for *Ratchet & Clank* but if the quality of the Spyro games is anything to go by, it could be smokin'! □ ME

ZOMBIES GOING CHEAP

The first platinum label games coming from Capcom Eurosoft.

THE \$49.95 PLATINUM RANGE of chart-topping PlayStation 2 games has swelled this month with an announcement from THQ. Joining the likes of *Gran Turismo 3*, *Dead or Alive 2* and *Red Faction* in the Platinum ranks are two top survival horror gems from Capcom. Thanks to THQ, Australian gamers will be able to pick up both *Onimusha: Warlords* and *Resident Evil Code: Veronica X* at half the price of a regular game.



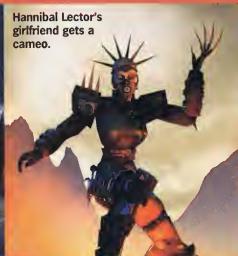
UNREAL NEWS FROM INFOGAMES

Multiplayer madness due this summer.

GOOD NEWS FOR FPS FANS has hit this month in the form of *Unreal II*, the sequel to the popular frag fest *Unreal*. Due for release this Christmas, the focus in *Unreal II* will be on a compelling single-player storyline developing over ten levels or worlds where the player can return for a breather in an orbiting spaceship to grab a spot of R&R before the next sortie.

And for your multiplayer delectation and

delight, we have *Unreal Tournament 2003*. Packed with 30 battle arenas and over 50 playable characters, *UT2003* boasts new playing modes, more weapons and special effects and much improved player models. Crucially, the game's AI will also be significantly boosted and there promises to be a lot more detail in the arenas themselves. *Unreal Tournament 2003* will be out this summer. □ ME



CAPCOM VS SNK

Capcom Eurosoft to release arcade giant.

THERE'S LIFE IN THE OLD bird yet – also from Capcom Eurosoft and THQ, the arcade beat 'em up that pitches you against your favourite *Streetfighter* brawlers against the same number of hotheads from the *SNK King of Fighters* and *Fatal Fury* camps is heading to a PlayStation near you. Whether you favour Ryu, Chun-Li or Yuki, up to four characters can be entered into a fight depending on who you choose (each fighter is allocated points, so it's up to you how to mix and match 'em). Players will be able to choose between SNK and Capcom "groove" systems which affects the behaviour of the power bar and both Normal and Turbo play modes will be in the game. There's even a "Colour Edit" mode that allows changes to the outfits for those of you who still spend lunchtimes down at McDonald's arguing over which street fighter has the best costume. Discussion over. *Capcom vs SNK Pro* is scheduled for a July 2002 release. □ ME



Devoted fans of both camps will have a lot to shout about this July.



Computer Artworks' *The Thing* combines stunning visuals with a unique gameplay twist.



It all gets to much for one NPC.

"It's alright mate. He's one of us."

THING THAT MAKES YOU GO HMM

Computer Artworks' *The Thing* impresses OPS2 with its intelligent trust/fear gameplay.

OPS2 RECENTLY HAD hands-on experience with Computer Artworks' action adventure *The Thing* and, from first impressions, can confirm that it's everything we were hoping for. Although it was far from complete, the visuals were in keeping with the 1982 John Carpenter movie it's based on. More importantly, the much-hyped trust/fear gameplay dynamic appeared to be heading towards a level that is best described as truly intelligent gaming.

Already mentioned in previous issues of OPS2, *The Thing* introduces an original game concept which involves building a team of three non-player characters (NPCs) including an engineer, a soldier and a medic. Each has an integral part to play in the completion of the various stages. However, it isn't as simple as just walking up to NPCs and asking for help. "The twist comes in with the trust and fear element – NPCs won't just do what they're told," explains Chris Hadley, Senior Producer at CA. "The trust is down to whether they believe you're infected with the Thing or not. This depends pretty much on how you behave around them."

This was cleverly demonstrated in a scene we saw in which the central character enters a room to find two NPCs holding guns to each other. Neither trusts each other, or you. This can be checked via an interface which shows their state of mind through a facial animation and a colour (green, amber or red, with green being the highest level of trust). By shooting one of the characters, who is then revealed to be infected when he voraciously

transforms into a Thing, the other character trusts you slightly more. Further actions will then increase his trust until his on-screen display turns green – he'll then help you out.

In the trailer we saw prior to our hands-on demo, one stomach churning scene showed a character vomiting all over the floor. This, as Hadley describes, is a graphic indication of an NPC's fear. "The interesting elements come in the two extreme states of emotion which are no trust whatsoever and complete fear," he says. "If NPCs are frightened they'll throw up, wet themselves or curl up in a foetal position and cry. On the other hand, if they don't trust you they'll eventually see you as an enemy and attack." A large part of playing *The Thing* is taken up winning the trust of characters, keeping your team happy and getting them to complete tasks based on their individual skills.

What CA should be congratulated for at this stage is taking an essential component of the movie the game is based on – the idea that you can trust nobody – building it into the gameplay and making it work. The result is to instill a paranoid fear into the player at the start which never really lets up. Furthermore, the music, visual effects, character and Thing design are all in place. Hadley told us that, so far, John Carpenter has had no involvement at all with the production of the game. Nevertheless, from what we've seen of it, we'd hazard a guess that he'd be pleased with the Computer Artworks treatment of his work. □ GW

HAWK GETS GONG

Forget the Oscars, this is real red-carpet stuff!

THE VIDEOGAME INDUSTRY'S most prestigious awards were recently handed out at the D.I.C.E. Summit in Las Vegas. The Academy of Interactive Sciences awards ceremony was held for the fifth time, and Activision's hit *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3* picked up one of the major accolades for Best Console Sports Game of the Year.

Joel Jewett, President of Neversoft Entertainment accepted the award and said, "This honour is special because it represents recognition from our peers in the videogame industry." Quite so.

The Academy's board of members comprises some of the industry's most revered figures, with most of the major software companies represented. Among others, the board includes representatives from Sony, Insomniac, Electronic Arts, Infogrames and Oddworld inhabitants.

Other games to be honoured included *Gran Turismo 3* and *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance*. Other notable nominees were *Grand Theft Auto 3*, *Ico* and *Jak and Daxter*. □ RY



We're not entirely sure what's happening, but we damn well like it.

IT'S HUNTING TIME

Star Wars: Bounty Hunter.

MAKE A MENTAL NOTE:

Star Wars: Bounty Hunter will be released on the PlayStation 2. LucasArts have confirmed to OPS2 that we can expect the latest *Star Wars* adventure to be released locally before the end of the year.

The game will debut a new character from the *Star Wars* fold, Jango Fett and will take place between the events of *Episode I* and *Episode II*.

Bounty Hunter will be a 3D third-person action game and it is said that it will help place Jango's place in the *Star Wars* galaxy. Jango Fett will be portrayed as a sinister character and the *Bounty Hunter* worlds will be seedy and filled with thieves and assassins. On announcing the



Jango Fett: Boba's papa and just as cold hearted.

forthcoming game Tom Byron of LucasArts said, "Because of Boba Fett's amazing legacy Star Wars fans have been requesting a bounty hunter game from LucasArts for

years. *Star Wars Bounty Hunter* will make their wait well worth it, delivering the intense, suspense-filled experience players want and expect. Like his legendary son, Jango

Fett is mysterious and powerful. He's the ultimate anti-hero who defines much of what's cool about *Star Wars*." Jango Fett is also slated to debut in *Episode II*.

The game will span six worlds and 18 levels and for the first time in a *Star Wars* game, the development process will utilise the expertise of LucasArts' sister companies Industrial Light & Magic (ILM) and Skywalker Sound. □ RY

JOJO AU GO GO

Another gem from the land of the rising sun...

BASED ON THE MANGA books, *Whirlwind of Gold* will be the first of the peculiar JoJo titles to appear on the PS2 and we can confirm it will be coming to Australia. Having appeared in Super Famicom, coln-op, Dreamcast and PSone incarnations, this new 3D, cel-shaded version brings the fantasy fighter bang up to date.

So far, game details aren't solid but the PSone version gives us a good idea of what to expect. Developed by Capcom, the game was a combo of beat-em-up basics and the adventuring of a Story mode.

Whirlwind of Gold is based on series five of the JoJo comic, a series set in stylish Italian surroundings and based around Giorno Giovanna (JoJo) and his Stand (known as Gold).

The result looks like being a freeform 3D brawler, designed for multiplayer, tag team martial arts action. What OPS2 has seen can be encapsulated in the following: "It's a classy Euro-manga, cel-shaded, 3D beat-em-up with a rock metal soundtrack and no sense of decency." The action can only be described as "mental!" □ DE

PREHISTORIC THEME PARK

Jurassic Park: Project Genesis opens its gates to the PS2 public.

UNIVERSAL INTERACTIVE HAS announced that it will release *Jurassic Park: Project Genesis*, in which players can build their own Jurassic theme park. The game will feature elements of a park management sim, but also include various action sequences.

Jonathan Eubanks, Senior Producer at Universal Interactive Studios, explains, "You design your park and place every physical and man-made feature into it, like rivers and trees, and cages for the dinosaurs. However, because we know that some people out there might want a bit of action, we've created 12 preset scenarios which you have to enter and take control of." Eubanks is particularly excited about the graphical quality of the main attraction of your park – the dinosaurs. "They're like nothing you'll ever see. They're awesome! In fact many of the other departments at Universal were so impressed they've been asking to use them, too!"

Staying true to the lessons seemingly never truly learned by the films – that caging angry tyrannosaurus rexes and speedy raptors usually ends in unmitigated disaster – if you mismanage your park, be it

financially, or just by being an unpleasant boss, the prehistoric reptiles will get out. In a park full of visitors this spells carnage. Which is where the action element comes in, as you attempt to tranquilize or trap any loose creatures before they create too much mayhem.

Management or god sims like this tend to be more commonplace on the PC where the mouse and keyboard interface offers an ideal control system. However, Eubanks is quick to reassure us that UI have taken this into account. "It might be in the same vein as PC titles like *The Sims*. But *Jurassic Park: Project Genesis* has been developed specifically with consoles in mind. This means that all the menus and controls will be perfectly suited for navigation with a joystick."

Judging by the success already enjoyed by similar titles like *The Sims* and the ongoing box office dominance of the *Jurassic Park* film series, we can only imagine that *Project Genesis* will be a popular Christmas present when it's released at the end of the year. □ GW

**Jurassic Park: PG* is out at the end of 2002 through UI.



In action sequences like this you'll need to tranquilize rogue dinos.



BITE MY SHINY METAL ASS!

Futurama's on its way to PS2 from Unique Development Studios.

MATT GROENING'S animated comedy sci-fi *Futurama* was revealed last month to be in development as a PS2 game. As first reported in OPS2, the title is now well underway and being handled by Swedish coders UDS (Unique Development Studios), the team behind recent PSone hit *World's Scariest Police Chases*.

Futurama, first launched in March 1999, is currently in its fourth season and introduced viewers to the hilarious exploits of hopeless human Fry, his suicidal robot sidekick Bender and the beautiful, if slightly cycloptic, Leela. The game will attempt to bring the same level of comedy to PS2 as players take on the role of one of the three main characters in a 3D action-adventure set in the year 3000.

As well as being set in the same exotic sci-fi environments as the TV series, the story was devised by *Futurama* scriptwriter J Stewart Burns – Groening himself has also been heavily involved since the game's

conception. In order to capture the spirit of *Futurama*'s vibrant visuals, the developer has created a custom-made cartoon-rendering engine which will give the player the impression they are playing an episode of the show. Even more importantly, the game will feature all of the main voice artists from the series.

As huge fans of *Futurama*, which has yet to really take off in the same way as *The Simpsons* in Australia (unless you're an ardent *Simpsons* fan that couldn't hold out for the new series), OPS2 hopes that Unique Development Studios will do the series justice and bring a whole new legion of fans to Bender's sardonic wisecracks, Fry's lazy heroism and Dr Zoidberg's obsessive love of anchovies. □ GW/MG



MALICIOUS INTENT

OPS2 tests *Malice*, Argonaut's platform adventure with attitude.

IN A SURPRISING TURN, the former Xbox exclusive *Malice* will now make an appearance on PS2! OPS2 was recently given the chance to play a short demo to see how development was progressing. Perhaps best known for the game's eponymous heroine and her hefty hammer weapon, little was known about the gameplay specifics. However, we can now tell you it's best described as an action adventure, played in the style of a 3D platformer. The game will be played over 25 fantasy environments in which *Malice* must attempt to defeat her ultimate enemy, known as the Ju Ju Man.

The demo consisted of three different levels labelled Easy, Medium and Hard, in which we had to solve a series of puzzles of increasing difficulty. The first of these was completed after discovering a giant-sized version of *Malice* that mimicked her actions.

Meanwhile, high on an otherwise unreachable platform lay an object necessary to complete the level. By double jumping in the right position, *Malice*'s Jumbo twin banged her head on the platform, causing it

to drop to the floor. Clever, no? In the hard level, a series of moving floors had to be negotiated in a particular order to reach the other side of a bottomless chasm, which proved – as the working level title suggests – a little tough.

Without getting overly technical, it was noticeable that Argonaut has worked hard on background textures and the animation of *Malice* and her many adversaries. As well as using her hammer to simply bash things into the ground (with a very satisfying thud) you are also able to code other special moves into the tool-like Hammer Storm and MowOmatic (a spiked lawn mower). There is also a series of magic powers at the player's disposal, each with three levels of power. This will add attacks like Boulder Waves, Root Quakes, Tsunamis, Blade Storms and Water Walls to your arsenal.

Argonaut's main concern for the game is to develop a 'rich' game world with an engaging storyline and plenty of bizarre characters; objectives it is already well on the way to achieving. Aside from a few control and camera issues which occasionally made movement difficult [most likely due to the un-optimised nature of the version we played] the sassy *Malice* has the makings of a new console icon. Crash Bandi-who? □ GW

**Malice* is out on PS2 in early 2003 through Sierra/Vivendi Universal.



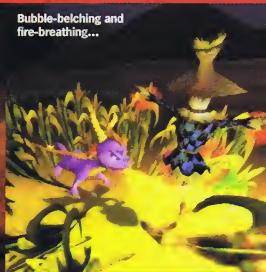
[Above] New in-game PS2 shots show how well *Malice* is progressing.
[Below] Hammer time: Another bug bites the dust, oozing green slime.



All the fun of *Spyro*, in glossy PS2 form.



Bubble-belching and fire-breathing...



YEAR OF THE DRAGON?

Pigs might fly! Well, cows actually, but only in Equinove/Check 6's *Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly*.

SPYRO: ENTER THE DRAGONFLY will be the first appearance for the dragon on PS2. The story goes that, after the Year of The Dragon Festival, all of the dragonflies in Spyro's world have been mysteriously stolen and it's up to Spyro and Sparx to find them.

OPS2 has played an early version and can confirm it has lost nothing from the last highly received PSone game. Ricci Rukavina, Creative Director for the title, explains, "Our major focus for *Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly* is to make a very smooth transition from the

older PSone platform to a more advanced one and deliver a traditional *Spyro* experience while adding more advanced features, which the PS2 enables us to do." Equally important has been retaining that essential feel that has attracted such a devoted following. "What is a *Spyro* game without Spacecow?" laughs Rukavina. One bizarre level we played showed *Spyro* flying a UFO around a field, picking up unsuspecting cows with a tractor beam.

Other levels will include a tank and a

magical cattle prod. "My favourite level at the moment is called Dragonfly Dojo," enthuses Rukavina. "It's essentially a training centre for dragonflies."

The finished game will have 25 different areas to explore with *Spyro* flying, swimming and using vehicles like a Spitfire or a flying carpet. As well as breathing fire, *Spyro* has a number of attacks such as ice, electricity and bubble breath. This new game promises to be everything it was on PSone, but with a lot more PS2 'newness' besides. □ GW



Exploring wrecks may turn up a few surprises.





BASKET CASE

Whoever said that white men can't jump, anyway?

TAKING A STEP AWAY from the slick stylings and simulations of EA's *NBA Live* series, *Street Hoops* is yet another take on the sport of hoops more in the slant of *NBA Street*.

Street Hoops will include some of the most revered US street courts such as 'the Cage' in New York City, LA's Venice Beach Courts, Oakland's Mosswood Playground, Philadelphia's Lombard Court, Chicago's Jackson Park, NYC's Rucker Park, Atlanta's Run 'n Shoot and New Orleans' Shakespeare Park. With strong arcade influences, you'll be able to compete in a nationwide tournament and characters will include players that featured in Nike's recent 'Freestyle' commercial campaign.

Few other details are yet to be released, however OPS2 does know that various game modes will be available and that 'street attitude' and 'betting' on the outcome of your games will be included. We anticipate that *Street Hoops* will be a fun and chaotic multiplayer experience. □ **RY**

* *Street Hoops* is currently scheduled for release in Australia in September.

FEELING BLUE?

Capcom suits up in diving gear and dives in...

RIDING ON THE TAIL OF THEIR successful slash 'em up *Maximo*, Capcom Eurosoft has just announced that its next PS2 project will be entitled *Everblue*. As the name suggests, *Everblue* is a non-linear diving adventure game and is being developed by the same team that brought the successful *Streetfighter* games into the world!

Diving games have been attempted before and have only achieved very minimal success. *Everblue* not only has the pedigree behind it with the experience of Capcom, but as these screenshots testify, it's set to be a visually beautiful game.

The basic premise of the game will see players diving for treasure and taking underwater snapshots, which they can then sell to traders upon returning to land. In turn, this will allow them to upgrade their scuba gear, thus allowing them to dive to greater depths and open up further aquatic wildernesses.

This game will undoubtedly represent a new experience for the majority of gamers. OPS2 hopes that the game is able to translate its potential into tangible gameplay success. "Everblue is a truly unique title for PlayStation 2," said David Miller, of Capcom Eurosoft. "Not only is it the first diving adventure game on the system, but its mixture of adventure and RPG elements combined with the attention to detail of the underwater scenes give it wide-reaching appeal." □ **RY**

HARD TIMES

Bits Studios' *Die Hard: Vendetta* on PS2 in 2003? That's what OPS2 reckons...

NEVER ONE to miss out on a bit of gaming-related gossip, OPS2 has learned from two separate official sources that first-person shooter *Die Hard: Vendetta*, currently in development for Nintendo's GameCube console by Bits Studios, will also be produced for PS2 with a release slated for some stage in 2003.

So how have we come to this assumption? Firstly, in a recent interview with Foo Katan, the MD and CEO of Bits Studios, he was asked whether *Die Hard: Vendetta* would appear on any other next-gen platforms. He replied, "PS2 at some point, but nothing we can announce." Which anyone with half an ounce of nous will see as a 'yes'. Secondly, at a recent games day hosted by Viendi Universal, a source close to Sierra mentioned it had plans to release a PS2 version, most likely in 2003.

This speculation aside, it would certainly be a very welcome conversion. Having already ported the brilliant first-person PC shooter *Half-Life* to PS2, any PS2 port of *Die Hard* overseen by Sierra would undoubtedly be of the highest quality. As for the game itself, *Die Hard: Vendetta* once again finds John McClane, the human embodiment of Sod's Law, working the streets of LA wreaking havoc wherever he goes. Although it was running on a different platform and only 30 per cent complete, the code we saw demonstrated a comprehensive control system that allowed you to jump, climb and swing on ropes while viewing the action in a first-person perspective. In one scene, while hero John McClane held a man hostage, the view showed your arm around the man's neck, his head under your chin.

As well as these gameplay elements, the characters you meet in the course of the game exhibit a high level of artificial intelligence, reacting to their surroundings through sight, sound, pain and heat. Furthermore, characters have memories and co-operate with fellow goons to fight in a team. John McClane also speaks with his famous dry wit and other characters interact with you, complete with facial expressions and unique dialogue.

The official line from Sierra and Bits Studios is that their priorities lie elsewhere at the moment. But OPS2 is almost certain that there'll be an announcement to confirm this story in the coming months. □ **GW**

*Look out for more PS2 *Die Hard* news soon.



HERE WE GO!

Konami announces *Winning Eleven 6* in Japan. That'll be *Pro Evolution Soccer 2* then.

ALTHOUGH PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER has been around in Australia for less than six months, its Japanese equivalent has already had the sequel unveiled, with a new cover star to boot. This time Masashi Nakayama for Gon Nakayama as he's known to his fans! star of J-League team Jubilo Iwata will adorn the Japanese game box.

The reason PS2 football fans will be excited at the news is that *Winning Eleven 5* eventually became the game known as *Pro Evolution Soccer*. It's therefore entirely likely that *WE5* will be the basis of *Pro Evolution Soccer 2*, which OPS2 could predict will be even better than the first one.

In terms of structure the new game will include 40 teams with up-to-date rosters as well as their accompanying strips. As the League mode progresses you'll be able to edit players in exchange for points and there will now be a total of 29 international teams with new additions such as the United States.



The now legendary Japanese commentary will be supplied by John Kapila and Tetsuo Nakanishi and the theme tune will be the somewhat inappropriate *We Are The Champions* by Queen.

In terms of changes to the gameplay, OPS2 is yet to have hands-on experience of the title, but late last year when speaking to Sea Bass Takatsuka, the Project Leader at developer KCE TYO, he told us that his team made a point of scouring fan sites on the Internet to see exactly what gamers would like to see in future versions. "If there's anything that fans wish to include, we will be happy to add it," he promised.

Takatsuka-san also revealed that there's still much work to be done before they create the perfect football game. "Personally speaking I think another two years to get the passing right. But basically another four years are needed to get even close to being perfect." □ GW

NEED FOR SPEED HEATS UP

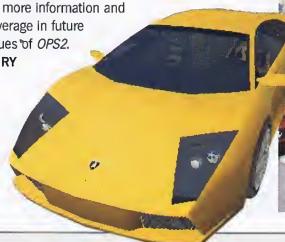
The game that lets you pretend you're a cop. If you want.

ELECTRONIC ARTS IS CURRENTLY finishing up work on the latest in its *Need for Speed* franchise. The PS2 release date has just slipped into September as the team makes final preparations on the code for release.

The last version of the game, *Need for Speed Porsche Unleashed*, was widely regarded as the weakest in the series, but EA is looking to revive the glory days and resurrect the features that originally popularised the series.

Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2 will again feature police cars, with the Pursuit mode forming a major part of the gameplay. What's most interesting to local fans is that the game will again include Falcons and Commodores, so the throaty roar of these thumpers will live again on your TV screens! Look out for more information and coverage in future issues of OPS2.

□ RY



Tracks should be pretty realistic.

Our heroine Miku manages to look fetching, even in the stark black and white of *Project ZERO*.

CAN-DEAD CAMERA

Explore a haunted mansion for shooting in *Project ZERO*.

FRENCH PUBLISHER WANADOO has signed Japanese oddity *Project ZERO* which has the potential to be one of the most terrifying and unique survival-horror/action games on the PS2 yet. The game, developed by Tecmo (*Dead Or Alive 2*) is being released in Japan with the same title and in America as *Fatal Frame*.

In fact, the US moniker gives us a clue as to the game's ingenious gimmick – you roam the isolated and haunted Himuro mansion, location of a series of brutal murders, with only a camera and a few supernatural powers to protect yourself. If that alone sounds like a terrifying enough prospect, add in the fact that the deserted mansion has no electricity and your only light source is a narrow torch beam.

The story to this edgy, offbeat title is possibly the first of its kind and is the product of the personal experiences and childhood memories of the Producer and Director, Keisuke Kikuchi and Makoto Shibata respectively. Mayafu, a young journalist investigating the murders at the Himuro residence, visits the notorious house and doesn't return. After nine days, his sister Miku has a premonition that he's in danger and goes to try and

find him. However, Miku is no gun-toting, gung-ho shoot-now-ask-questions-later heroine. In the way that Claire Redfield was in *Resident Evil Code: Veronica X* instead, Miku's powers are more supernatural – she's blessed with a sixth sense enabling her to see what others can't.

The way Miku defends herself is to take pictures of the damned souls that inhabit the house – the more centred a ghost is in a photo, the more damage is inflicted. Points earned for each photo increase the camera's capabilities like greater zoom power and faster wind-on. The camera can also be used to solve puzzles, allowing you to see secret images which lead you to other parts of the house.

What is currently most impressive is the incredible sense of dread it inflicts on the player. Developer Tecmo has presented an incredibly oppressive atmosphere through clever use of music, sound effects, eerie lighting and visual effects which include switching the action from colour to black and white and back again. The feeling of vulnerability is also emphasised through the lack of any physical, tangible enemies – the power of suggestion is the primary fear.

Miku is quite literally caught red-handed.

Come on! This is no time to get all reflective!

mechanism in the game. Project ZERO may appear to borrow elements from both the *Silent Hill* and *Resident Evil* series but adds in its own Japanese horror twist. The best description is Dong-Bin Kim's disturbing film *Ring* crossed with *Silent Hill 2*, in which you've accidentally packed an Instamatic instead of a hefty club. A terrifying prospect if ever there was one. □ GW

*Project Zero will be released by Wanadoo later this year.

Project ZERO deals in some particularly distressing imagery.



PSone Top 10

| RANK | TITLE | CATEGORY | PUBLISHER |
|------|--------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 01 | HARRY POTTER | ADVENTURE | EA |
| 02 | TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3 | SPORTS | ACTIVISION |
| 03 | MONSTERS INC | ADVENTURE | DISNEY |
| 04 | WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE? | FAMILY | EIDOS |
| 05 | SYPHON FILTER 3 | ADVENTURE | 989/SONY |
| 06 | PETER PAN | ADVENTURE | SONY |
| 07 | WWF SMACKDOWN! 2 | SPORTS | THQ |
| 08 | TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2 | SPORTS | ACTIVISION |
| 09 | SPIDERMAN: ENTER ELECTRO | ADVENTURE | ACTIVISION |
| 10 | FIFA 2002 | SPORTS | EA |

PS2 RELEASE SCHEDULE (cont)

| JUNE | TITLE | CATEGORY | PUBLISHER |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2 | Sports | TAKE 2 | UBISOFT |
| Open Kart | Racing | RED ANT | UBISOFT |
| Taz Wanted | Action | OZISOFT | UBISOFT |
| Jimmy White's Cueball World | Sports | OZISOFT | UBISOFT |
| Conflict: Desert Storm | Shooter | OZISOFT | UBISOFT |
| V8 Supercars | Racing | OZISOFT | UBISOFT |
| Prisoner Of War | Adventure | OZISOFT | UBISOFT |
| V Rally 3 | Racing | OZISOFT | UBISOFT |
| Spec Ops 2 | Action | TAKE 2 | UBISOFT |
| 4 x 4 Evolution 2 | Racing | TAKE 2 | UBISOFT |
| Austin Powers | Adventure | TAKE 2 | UBISOFT |
| Jimmy Neutron Boy Genius | Arcade | THQ | UBISOFT |
| Gitaroo Man | Dance Sim | THQ | UBISOFT |
| Onimusha [Platinum] | Action | THQ | UBISOFT |
| Resident Evil: Code Veronica X | Action | THQ | UBISOFT |
| Scooby-Doo & the Night of 100 Frights | Action | THQ | UBISOFT |
| Smash Court Tennis | Sports | SONY | UBISOFT |
| Frequency | Music | SONY | UBISOFT |

PS2 Top 10

| RANK | TITLE | CATEGORY | PUBLISHER |
|------|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 01 | METAL GEAR SOLID 2 | ADVENTURE | KONAMI |
| 02 | GRAND THEFT AUTO 3 | ADVENTURE | TAKE 2 |
| 03 | TIME CRISIS 2 | ACTION | NAMCO |
| 04 | STATE OF EMERGENCY | ADVENTURE | TAKE 2 |
| 05 | ACE COMBAT: DISTANT THUNDER | SIMULATOR | NAMCO |
| 06 | G1 JOCKEY | SPORTS | THQ |
| 07 | MAXIMO: GHOSTS TO GLORY | ACTION | THQ |
| 08 | ICO | ADVENTURE | SONY |
| 09 | CRICKET 2002 | SPORTS | EA |
| 10 | TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3 | SPORTS | ACTIVISION |

PSone RELEASE SCHEDULE

| MAY | TITLE | CATEGORY | PUBLISHER |
|--------------------|--------|----------|-----------|
| Formula One Arcade | Racing | SONY | |

| JUNE | TITLE | CATEGORY | PUBLISHER |
|--------------------|--------|----------|-----------|
| Spec Ops: Airborne | Action | TAKE 2 | |

| JULY | TITLE | CATEGORY | PUBLISHER |
|-------------|---------|----------|-----------|
| Serious Sam | Shooter | TAKE 2 | |

| SEPTEMBER | TITLE | CATEGORY | PUBLISHER |
|----------------------|--------|----------|-----------|
| Celebrity Deathmatch | Action | TAKE 2 | |

| JULY | TITLE | CATEGORY | PUBLISHER |
|-------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Serious Sam | Shooter | TAKE 2 | |
| Black Dahlia | Adventure | TAKE 2 | |
| MX 2003: Superfly | Extreme | THQ | |
| Pacman World | Arcade | SONY | |

| AUGUST | TITLE | CATEGORY | PUBLISHER |
|------------------------|--------|------------|-----------|
| Tenchi 3 | Action | ACTIVISION | |
| Simpsons Skateboarding | Arcade | EA | |

| SEPTEMBER | TITLE | CATEGORY | PUBLISHER |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Celebrity Deathmatch | Action | TAKE 2 | |
| Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2 | Racing | EA | |
| Iron Storm | Action | TAKE 2 | |
| Gladiator Wrestling | Sports | EA | |
| The Curse | Adventure | TAKE 2 | |
| Transworld Surfing | Extreme | OZISOFT | |
| Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer | Extreme | ACTIVISION | |
| Rally 2002 | Racing | EA | |
| Race of Champions | Racing | ACTIVISION | |
| X-Men Next Dimension | Action | ACTIVISION | |
| Street Hoops | Sports | ACTIVISION | |

| NOVEMBER | TITLE | CATEGORY | PUBLISHER |
|---------------------------|--------|----------|-----------|
| The Getaway | Action | OZISOFT | |
| Delta Force: Land Warrior | Action | Nova | |

| QUARTER 03 | TITLE | CATEGORY | PUBLISHER |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------------|-----------|
| Star Wars: Bounty Hunter | Action | EA | |
| QUARTER 04 | | | |
| Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly | Platform | Vivendi Universal | |
| Soul Calibur 2 | Beat 'em up | Namco | |
| Ape Escape 2 | Platform | Sony | |
| TimeSplitters 2 | FPS | Eidos | |

PS2 RELEASE SCHEDULE

| MAY | TITLE | CATEGORY | PUBLISHER |
|---------------------------------|---------|------------|-----------|
| F1 2002 | Racing | EA | |
| Freekstyle | Extreme | EA | |
| Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2 | Racing | EA | |
| Medal of Honor: Frontline | Action | EA | |
| Spider-man: The Movie | Action | ACTIVISION | |
| Rally Championship | Racing | OZISOFT | |
| Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing | Sports | OZISOFT | |
| Soldier of Fortune Gold | Shooter | OZISOFT | |
| Star Trek Voyager : Elite Force | Shooter | OZISOFT | |
| Stuntman | Action | OZISOFT | |
| Austin Powers Pinball | Puzzle | TAKE 2 | |
| Skateboarding Game | Extreme | TAKE 2 | |
| Trophy Chase (aka: Hunting) | Shooter | TAKE 2 | |



Official Star Wars Web Site www.starwars.com

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THE PlayStation®2 INTERVIEW

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-AUSTRALIA

WORDS: AMOS WONG/PHOTOGRAPHY: CHARLES PERTWEE

Fumito Ueda

Set in a bewitching yet austere castle, *Ico* brings a rare beauty to PS2 gameplay. OPS2 met the man behind the masterpiece to unlock the secrets within the castle walls.



Talking about what is, amazingly, the first game he has directed, Fumito Ueda remarks that in *Ico* he sought to create "a real fantasy experience." The result is so much more – *Ico* is original, beautiful and utterly unforgettable. During his forthcoming trip to Las Vegas for the AIAS Achievement Awards (*Ico* has been nominated in several categories) Ueda-san is planning to visit the Grand Canyon to research his next PS2 game. Given *Ico*'s reception, it'll definitely be one to look out for.

What Inspired *Ico*'s original concept?
When I was in high school I saw a TV commercial with a lady holding the hand of a child, walking through the woods and the image just stuck with me. When I came up with the pairing concept I had a woman and a young boy in mind. There's also a famous manga called *Galaxy Express 999*. It's about a woman named Maetel who's a guardian for the young hero Tetsuro as they adventure through the galaxy. I thought that even though it was an old story, it could be adapted into a new idea for videogames.

Did you have any other ideas?
Originally, *Ico* was meant for PSone and it was the girl who had horns. She was trapped in a small room and the boy was one of the slave workers in the castle, who found the room and helped the girl escape.

When did the game development start?
It began in February 1998. We originally used pre-rendered backgrounds and then switched to real-time 3D. All the animation was done by hand and I used Simon and Garfunkel's *Scarborough Fair* for the music – this later became the inspiration for *Ico*'s theme. We were halfway through development when PS2 came along. As a planner, I wanted to release the game on PSone because, at its launch, the PS2 didn't have many good games – they were all rushed to be released on time. But as a designer, I was attracted to the PS2's high specs because you can achieve so much more, graphically.

Both *Ico* and Yorda are endearing and original characters. How did you go about designing them?
I wanted to achieve a look somewhere between a Japanese and a foreign style. It was a long process of trial and error –

actually, I wasn't sure what to do with them myself! For Yorda, I eventually asked one of the female team members to refine the character. I kept on changing things from the start, right up until the master was due. I gave Yorda a haircut just at the last moment.

Players comment that they really care about Yorda. How do you create a character that provides players with such a strong sense of attachment?

The core team members and myself concentrated on characterising her. For instance, outside of the gameplay Yorda often makes strange movements: she strolls around, follows birds and points to things. Some of the team members wondered why they were working on this stuff [laughs]. We are attracted

"I kept on changing things right up until the master was due. I gave Yorda a haircut just at the last moment"

by the quirks of girlfriends, right? We didn't just want to use Yorda as an element to proceed through the game, we wanted to encourage the idea that the two are sharing an adventure, co-operating together. By putting in those particular movements, a player can feel that connection. Actually, I wanted to include more variations as these things were actually planned for the PSone version, but time was an issue.

The design of the castle and the various puzzles are amazing. How were they planned and created?

It started off as just a bunch of puzzles without textures, in a vaguely castle-like form. When the puzzles were okayed they were handed over to the designers who would then add more details. It took a lot of work to have it all make sense because all the stages were created individually. Occasionally, when we put the different stages together they didn't fit too well, so we'd have to cut or shuffle areas around. It was a constant

Horny hero *Ico* gets the drinks for a quiet Friday night in.

process of building and fixing that went on for about two years. The reason why I concentrated on this so much was that the castle had to be realistic in terms of architecture.

What kind of research was involved in creating the architecture?

I've never been to a real castle before and was inspired by the work of Giovanni Battista Piranesi, an artist from 18th century Italy. Japanese rural scenery was also inspirational, things like deserted cars near rice fields and semi-built-up areas near the countryside.

Are there any technologies or graphic techniques in the game that you're particularly proud of?

It's kind of hard for our team to compete with, say, Square or Namco in terms of realism, so we used different techniques to make big contrasts within the environment. When you look at the castle, for instance, there are shadowy places and bright, sunlit areas for a more dramatic expression. Of course, you could present a colourful, vibrant world, but *Ico* has a subtle and reserved style. Take movies as an example: even with modern technology available, some movies opt for a grainy effect for the visuals as a means of expression. *Ico* is lo-fi [running at 30 frames] and the modelling is in low resolution. The team intentionally avoided using the maximum graphic specs in order to give the game something different and make it stand out.

Will there be a sequel?

At this point we're not planning one, but I'd like to create a game that shares the same kind of atmosphere and concept. I'm actually in the midst of preparing another game at the moment, but I can't really talk about it yet.

What's your view on the state of the videogames market?

I'd compare movies to cars and motorcycles to games. The motorcycle market is smaller than the car market, which is similar to games versus movies. But when you think about it, riding a motorcycle is more practical in a city; it's cheaper and more manoeuvrable, but people still prefer cars because of the image; they're more luxurious. Games still have an image of being for 'gamers,' or the younger generation. In the future, I don't want people to think of movies as being better than games; I want to change that image. I also want to avoid the situation where producers make games that only target the core players. □

Curriculum Vitae

Name: Fumito Ueda
Job title: Product Manager, Product Development Dept. Sony Computer Entertainment
Nationality: Japanese
Date of birth: 19/04/1970
Place of birth: Hyogo prefecture
Gameography
1996: *Enemy Zero* (Sega Saturn Antutor)
2001: *Ico* Concept, planning, directing
Hobbies: Videogames, riding motorbikes
Favourite music: Movie soundtracks, "I'm listening to Amelie at the moment."
Favourite films: *Gladiator*, the movies of Ridley Scott

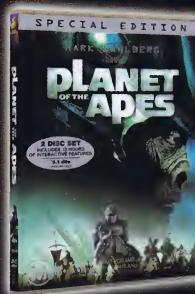




Ueda-san plans to visit the
Grand Canyon to research
his next PS2 game.

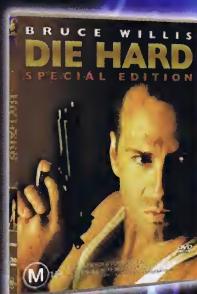
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JET OUT TO THE USA WITH US AND GET THE LOWDOWN ON *SOCOM: NAVY SEALS* AND THE NEW PLATFORMER FROM INSOMNIAC GAMES, *RATCHET AND CLANK*.

OPS2 GETS NITTY GRITTY WITH *AUTO MODELLISTA*. IS IT WORTH THE HYPE?

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OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE:
ISSUE 03 ON SALE: 22 MAY



Eden Studios intends to craft the most detailed environments ever seen in a rally game.



WORDS: SAM RICHARDS

THE V-SIGN

The World Rally Championship's popularity is growing and the rally games market is reaching saturation point. Can PSone favourite *V-Rally* shift up a gear to PS2 and outpace its rivals? Lyon-based developer Eden Studios thinks so.



"World Rally Championship is an arcade game," proclaims Eden Studios' founder and MD Stéphane Baudet with just a hint of a dismissive Gallic sneer. "It's not deep, and

difficulty is very weird. I consider myself an average player and I won every race first time. In terms of graphical details and car physics, WRC doesn't compare to us. We're already competing with WRC2."

Evolution Studios' rally benchmark brushed aside, Baudet turns to confront Codemasters' flagship racing series. "I can't say what Colin McRae 3 is like yet – apparently they are going down a similar route to our new *V-Rally* mode – but having only one racing team is a big limitation for them. We've proved we can have all the cars without signing one big licence. My question is what will the other games bring that *V-Rally* 3 doesn't? And we're out before them, in June."

Eden Studios doesn't lack confidence, but in a genre where franchise supremacy is now more hotly contested than football (*FIFA* vs *Pro Evolution Soccer*), fighting (*Tekken* vs *VF4*) or F1 (*SCEC* vs *EA* vs *Ubisoft* Soft vs every-bloody-one else) Baudet knows that his rally game has to steal a march on its motorcade of competitors.

The *V-Rally* series was born at Infogrames' internal studios in France circa 1996, where it began life, strangely enough, as a Formula 1 game. "We had the code up-and-running and we also investigated buying the F1 licence but Psynopsis had already claimed it for *FIA Formula 1*," Baudet explains. "We decided not to compete and move instead into the rally

market, where there were no games. I think it was a smart move because Bizarre Creations did a good F1 game and we did a good rally game."

V-Rally was an instant hit and, becoming independent from Infogrames in 1998, Eden went on to develop *V-Rally 2* and *Need For Speed: Porsche*. It is not just a racing game studio – half the company is currently hard at work on an as-yet-unnamed action/adventure game – but rally is what it knows best.

ARTISTIC LICENCE

Eden has also learned that it isn't necessarily good business to splash out on official licences. "As with the previous *V-Rally* games, we just got the licences from the individual car manufacturers. The main FIA rally licence doesn't bring a lot – just driver names, official team names, WRC logos. It's not like F1 where the drivers are really world famous, so we didn't think the licence was good value for money. There are also limitations. We couldn't have designed the courses in the way we wanted. All the WRC teams apart from Skoda have signed, plus we have all the cars that are running in the junior championship such as the Citroën Saxa and the Ford Puma. We are not limited to this season so the Toyota Corolla and the Seat Cordoba appear too."

Without being constrained to a 14-race season, Eden has opted for quality over quantity. "The rallies in some countries are too similar. You approach Portugal and Greece in



exactly the same way, for instance. It's better to have six interesting tracks than 14 average tracks. We chose the six most unique countries, both in terms of graphics and gameplay: Finland is specific to big jumps, Corsica is good for asphalt, Great Britain is special for the weather conditions, Sweden is the only rally where you can have deep snow, Germany is interesting because it's new to the WRC and Kenya is an obvious choice because it's demanding and the gameplay is so different."

The attention to detail Eden has lavished on these six tracks is instantly impressive. Whereas backgrounds in previous rally games seemed a little lifeless, *V-Rally* 3's partly hand-painted environments are vibrant and colourful – you'll motor past abandoned trucks, working farms, and in Kenya, lumbering elephants and deer sprinting across the tracks. Meanwhile, animated crowds wave and cheer, or swarm around your car at the finish if you post a record time. By concentrating on fewer countries, and studying data from the WRC courses and roads in that country similar to rally courses, Baudet is convinced that the



"We proved we can have all the cars without signing one big licence,"
Stéphane Baudet

V-RALLY 3



V-Rally 3's sunsets come over a bit new age.

It's not just mud, mountains and deserts here.



V-Rally 3 isn't restricted to the 2002 WRC cars, expanding the Career mode.

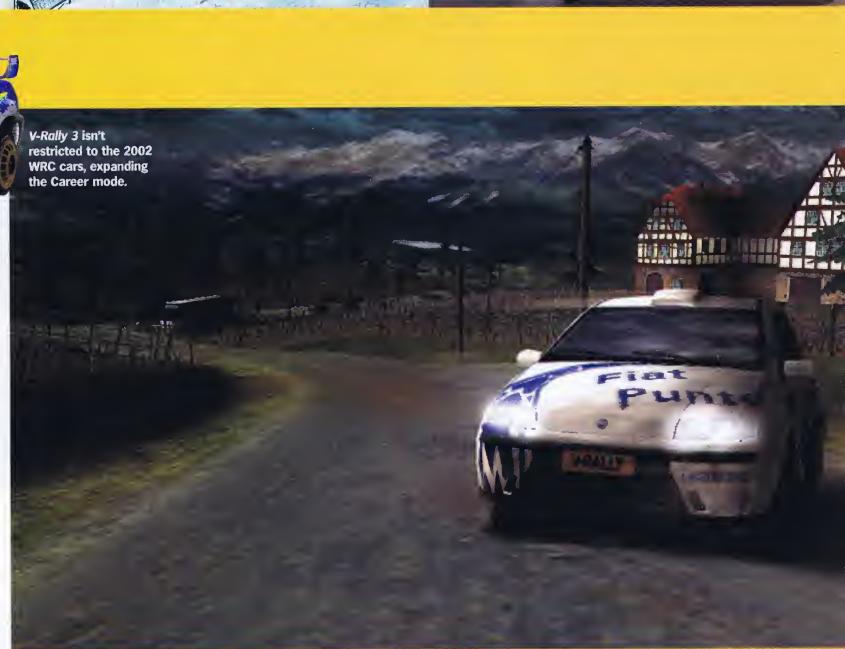
V-Rally 3 stages will represent a 'best of' for each country.

Arcade or simulation? Previously the V-Rally series has experimented with both approaches, the demanding vehicle handling of the first game giving way to a more instant playability for the second. For V-Rally 3, the real physics are back. "We thought that PS2 players are a bit more mature, so they would appreciate a more realistic game. The car set up reflects the simulation nature of the handling, but to keep it approachable, there is a resume feature and a simple points system for each variable. Car fans have plenty of choice, but novices will also be able to easily understand what they are doing."

Baudet takes us through the commendably in-depth tyre select system, showing off the choice of Pirelli and Michelin tyres used by the actual WRC cars, and explaining that while the game will make a recommendation for each surface, you can choose asphalt tyres in Sweden if you really must.

Damage is as harsh as the car manufacturers would allow, with every scrape affecting your driving in some way. "That's the great thing about a real physics engine. We can remove one piece of the car and the effect on the handling is automatic."

At one point, Eden was considering enhancing the game's realism by allowing you to place your own pacenotes, but eventually rejected the feature as "too painful" for the player. The tool still exists within the game, and that's how Eden had the freedom to place the pacenotes so accurately. V-Rally 2 relied on automatic notes because of its track editor (a



HELMET HEAD



Neal had to quickly dash home to turn off the iron.

Let's face it. No matter how many pundits think that our videogames are our real deal, there's always a pretty hefty element of fan work involved. After all, our opinions are mostly judged from the armchair and what we've heard 'expert' commentaries tell us through the box anyway. Three-time Aussie rally champion Neal Bates told OPS2 he was mighty impressed with what he saw in V-Rally 3. Since then, he 'got on board' so to speak, and is involved with the promotion of the game.

After ten years of driving for Toyota and picking up his three championships, Neal's experience now stretches to circuit racing and he's been a top competitor at Australia's most famous race, the Toorheys 1000 around Mt Panorama in Bathurst. Neal knows his rallying of course, and any fan of the Australian Rally Championship will be able to attest to that. He's been a consistent and top performer over a decade of what's become one of the country's most highly professional competitions.

Now driving for Lexus, Bates' rally machine now adorns the V-Rally 3 logo and at the recent launch of the game he told us, "I am excited to be involved with V-Rally 3 in Australia. V-Rally 3 is the next step in bringing the realism of rally driving to the fans and I am standards of rally simulation on games consoles." OPS2 had the pleasure of taking a spin with the rally icon and successfully testing out our mettle with some seriously sideways action; we reckon if it's good enough for him, it's good enough for us!

V-RALLY 3

Animated crowds wave, cheer and flock around your car if you post a fast time.



V-RALLY

Close View

- Left Rotate
- Right □ Open Doors
- Change View
- Wheels

mode now sadly but understandably removed but V-Rally 3 can give far more detailed commands – your co-pilot also has some harsh and panicked words for when you damage or crash the car. For the English language version, pacenotes are voiced by Alistair McRae's co-driver David Senior.

GOING SOLO

Four players can take part in Multiplayer mode, but races are sequential. There's no split-screen option, as Baudet explains. "There are too many graphical compromises we would have to make. When we saw WRC's Split-screen mode we thought, that's terrible, we don't want to do that. Because it's rally, it's all about solo racing anyway. If you want, you can have the ghost cars of your opponents on-screen for that extra competitive edge. We even had an I-Link mode up-and-running, with four cars racing simultaneously and appearing as ghosts on each others' screens. But there are so few people using I-Link, and the approval process is so complicated... maybe we'll stay in the game as a cheat option."

Most exciting is the all-new single-player

V-Rally mode. "It's too early to talk about this because we're still modifying the details," Baudet confides. "We don't want the competition to be aware! But let's just say there are no comparable game modes in racing games right now. The goal is for the player to be in the position of a rally driver, not just in the race, but in all the other aspects."

On the surface it sounds like a mere twist on the typical Career mode concept, but Baudet insists that we must think in more expansive terms than anything we're used to playing. "You won't

"The realistic car set up reflects the nature of the handling," Baudet



have only to drive the car, you'll have to do lots of other things. You will have to make decisions that don't necessarily involve driving. When you damage the car, it has more serious consequences if you're playing V-Rally mode. When you fall off the cliff... that's it! Of this deeply intriguing V-

Rally mode he will speak no more, only to agree that, yes, it does sound a little like what Codemasters are planning with Colin McRae Rally 3, and, no, he's not bothered about potential similarities because V-Rally 3 will allow any potential career driver to try out for junior rallies and to switch between teams.

With attitude and confidence like that on show, the rally game contest is shaping up to be almost as fascinating as the World Rally Championship itself, and like 2001's season, it could go right to the wire. □

RALLYING: THE NEW F1?

For those who prefer the earthy charms of rallying to the slick hyperrealism that F1 game fans appear to have plenty of choice. But will the proliferation of rally licences and the quest for realism leave us with ten near-identical games?



COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3

Developer: Codemasters
Publisher: Ubi Soft
Release date: October
The other heavyweight contender in the rally arena, Colin's two outings on PSone were perceived as being among the best automotive videogames at the time. The licence hinges on McRae and the Ford/M-Sport rally team.



PRO RALLY 2002

Developer: Ubi Soft
Publisher: Ubi Soft
Release date: March
Steaming in at the budget end of the market, Ubi Soft's rally effort promises 20 cars that together comprise a 'best of current and recent releases'. Definitely arcade-oriented, but still looks very polished. This is certainly worthy of checking out.



RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Developer: Warthog
Publisher: SCI
Release date: May
Sitting behind Colin McRae and V-Rally on PSone, Warthog's game is out for revenge on PS2. Again, most WRC cars are present, along with models from the 2.0 and 1.6 classes, and even the Mini Cooper. Intriguing locations include USA and the Isle of Man.



MASTER RALLYE

Developer: Steel Monkeys
Publisher: Microids
Release date: April
Based on an event autonomous from the WRC, customised cars race across Europe and Turkey. Stages feature four cars racing at the same time and players can venture offroad to uncover short cuts. Unlikely to impress.



EA SPORTS RALLY

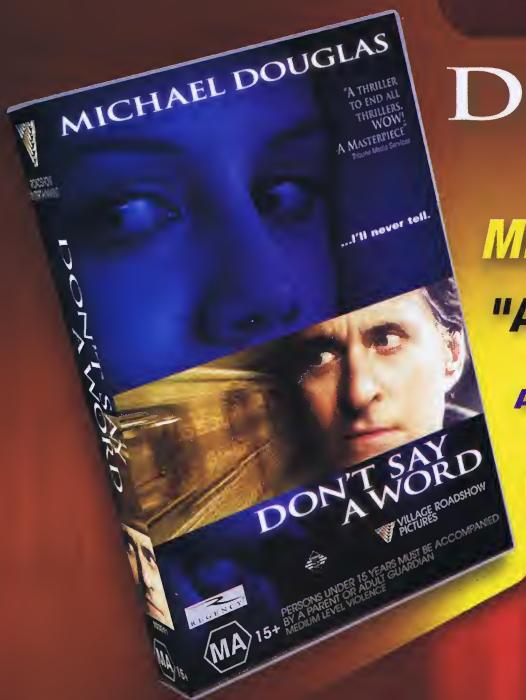
(Working title)
Developer: EA Sports
Publisher: EA Sports
Release date: Sept
It's hardly a surprise that EA Sports would attempt to capitalise on the rally boom sooner or later, although its tardy appearance on the scene may hamper chances of success. No details of this game were available at time of going to press.



WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP 2

Developer: Evolution Studios
Publisher: SCEE
Release date: November
Evolution may well become known as "the rally studio." With a massive head-start, expect WRC2 to return bigger and better before Christmas. Its heritage will count for a lot.

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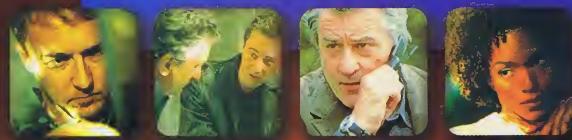
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Robert De Niro Edward Norton

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DOWNLOADED UK

We tour England so you don't have to! Steve Polak visited all the cool code shops and came back with a flight bag overloaded with the latest news on the best of British games heading this way.



Well, there we were. OPS2 had travelled a gruelling 24 hours in a flying sardine can and, now that we were on the ground in good old 'Blighty', it was time for the saga to begin. This was to be the tour what blew all other tours out of the water. We were going to see what the Poms were really up to. It was time to compare the best that the English restaurants had to offer to determine if Pommy food was really as crap as everyone says. Oh, and we checked out a few games as well.

INFOGRAMES

The first day we got the ball rolling by visiting the fabulous French and English folk who work for Infogrames at Landmark House on the outskirts of London. Here, we were to get our hands on such gaming delights as *Supermon* and *V-Rally 3*, with *Stuntman* to follow later.

SCI

Having spent the day at Infogrames, it was time to nip off for a brief few hours food, insomnia and then visit Sci, who had two top looking titles on show, and another game which is well... perhaps only for the fans.

The most exciting game on show at Sci's offices, which are located right next to the rather dingy Thames river, was *Desert Storm*. It was a pretty weird sensation wandering through the blistering desert landscapes as we played the game whilst it was freezing and rainy outside. *Desert Storm* is covered in more detail in our preview [page 26], but the game is a ripper to play. The other great-looking game was *Rally Championship*, but more of that elsewhere in this issue.

Sci had another game on show, *Gumball Rolly 3000*. If you enjoyed the *Gumball Rally* or better-known *Cannonball* racing movies, then this game might be the one for you. The game sees you racing all over Europe, heading from

London to Germany. The action is very arcade-like and this game is inspired by the likes of *Need for Speed* and the recent hit, *Burnout*. Gumball's cars didn't handle in the most believable manner, but the game was fast and some of the cars looked pretty cool too. That said, this game may prove to be an acquired taste, so try it before you hand over your wad. The ever-helpful Dave from Sci then whisked us away to Paddington station where we took a crowded train to place called... Leamington Spa, home of Codemasters.

CODEMASTERS

Codemasters HQ is a unique place. The massive company is the largest development facility in England and is located on a farm where the lads who started the company (the Darlings) were brought up. At one end you get a massive high tech office with key card security and cameras everywhere while tucked away in a corner is an old fashioned real farmyard.

MIKE TYSON HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING

You might have been disappointed by the last boxing game to bear his name, but the new Mike Tyson game is out to change this. The game now has a Street Fighter style super power punch and combo system, great visuals and a number of different championships. There are even two Mike Taysons for you to choose from; younger Iron Mike and a more current incarnation. You'll also get rewarded for dodging well, with your attack bar being charged by clever defensive movements. This then helps you get power for a counter attack, adding a strategic dimension to the game. The visuals were pretty cool with some pretty funny *Ready 2 Rumble*-style facial deformations and super move animations. You can also engage in illegal moves which do more damage, but might get you disqualified from the fight. However, try as we might we couldn't unlock a Tyson ear bite attack. You can also design your own boxer and as you defeat



opponents you unlock features like their special moves, and you can even pinch their shorts (not sure if this is such a great idea though).

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

Next up was *Soldier of Fortune*. What can we say about this game? It's easily the most gratuitous and controversial game headed your way short of the unabridged *Grand Theft Auto 3*. *Soldier of Fortune* is looking like being a mighty game if you like your action served up with plenty of carnage and body parts flying all over the place. In the game, you are John Mullins the mercenary. Having played the almost complete build, it's clear that this game keeps the sense of fast-paced action that helped make the PC game a hit. Blast enemies, and body parts go flying in all directions. The four-player deathmatch option was also fast and easy to get into and the levels were varied and full of weapon pickups. However, the game didn't play as smoothly as perhaps it should have in this mode, although James admitted there was still some tweaking to be done. Having played that, it was time to look at another PC shooter coming for the PlayStation2 - the very promising *Star Trek: Elite Force*.

STAR TREK: ELITE FORCE

As many of you will know, it isn't often that a good *Star Trek* game beams down from the nether regions. However, *Elite Force*, the *Star Trek* shoot-em-up which was a winner on the PC looks like bucking that trend and delivering the goods. The game sees you running around in a number of holodeck environments fighting Klingons, Borg and various other *Trek* species and the four person multiplayer experience was mighty satisfying indeed. Even though our number one soul brother James Brown ably whipped us most of the time, we put it down to Jetlag and still felt that this was a game worthy of further investigation.

While at Codemasters we also took a look at the awesome V8 Supercars Race Driver game, which you should check out in detail on page 10. Then it was time to leave Codemasters behind and visit another Leamington Spa-based developer. The plucky lads from Blitz Games are working on *Toz Wanted* (see

page 25), which is a great looking adventure game featuring that psycho Tassie Devil. Back to London to the Kabuki style structure in Wimbledon, which is the home of the folks at Eldos.

BLOOD OMEN 2

If you wanted to sink your teeth into something a little more corpulent, then this game, the first true sequel to the original *Legacy of Kain* vampire adventure, was fantastic (ahem). You have to rediscover your abilities as a vampire 400 hundred years after the original game, but obviously thousands of years before *Soul Reaver*. You must reclaim your kingdom of Nosgoth by fighting demon-like enemies, guards and knights. Naturally, you can also feast on the blood of your enemies as well as innocent civilians, and the 3D animation of your bloodsucking feasts is very cool if you are a fan of vampiric behaviour. You have special killer attacks and can do things like hide in the mist, stealthfully stalking your enemies.

You can also perform a brilliant high-speed charge, which kills enemies instantly and you can even burn some enemies to death with your immolate incantation. *Blood Omen* is a great looking adventure game, and the many moves you have at your disposal, coupled with the special vampire abilities, make this a challenging game.

COMMANDOS 2

Now put your 'serious' face on, soldier. This game was originally a huge hit on the PC and now that it comes to the PlayStation 2 it looks like having even more success as the PlayStation Army gets mobilised. In *Commandos 2*, you have to control a crack squad of specialists as you try and fight the German army while hopelessly outnumbered. The overhead view and the control system make this a very different kind of game and it is one which anyone who has played with toy soldiers in the sandbox as a kid will appreciate. Fighting huge numbers of German soldiers by using your specialist guys for the right task is a lot of fun. In the game there are troops like Jack Butcher O'Hara, the hard as nails hand-to-hand combat expert or Rene Duchamp, a sneaky thief type. Other troops include □

☐ a demolitions and weapons expert, a gadget guy who can drive vehicles, a diver and even a dog who helps you out at certain points by distracting enemy soldiers. The game was surprisingly easy to play and the animation and speech really helped you believe you were in the middle of a major battle. This was one title Nick, our chaperone from Eldos, had to tear out of our hands.

COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3

Naturally, the game which we were champing at the bit to see was Colin McRae 3, and we were the first in the world outside the development team to see the title or talk mastermind Guy Wilday about the game. We also got to play the game for a few hours, which was hugely promising, even at this early stage.

Colin 3 is looking like being a real eye opener. Guy is also keen to again raise the standards bar with this game and isn't afraid to lay down the challenge to the opposition: "We want the visual jump to be really big, but we want the gameplay jump to be a quantum one too. For example, the cars in the previous game were built with 600 polygons, now we are building them with 14,000 polygons. This is a huge jump." Indeed, the level of detail in the game is beyond anything we have seen. If you look in the car, there is an accurately modelled Colin McRae and Nicky Grist sitting there awaiting your lead-footed intervention. OPS2 even noticed that the antenna on the roof of the car moved with an elasticity which was miles ahead of any other game we have seen before. You could also see the suspension moving dynamically, flames spitting out of the exhaust and obvious debris from wheel spin as the car flashed past.

Driving was supremely enjoyable too, with the physics model definitely coming from the simulation end of the gene pool. Handbrake turns, power oversteer and power slides all felt superb, but were not too easy to control. This realistic and not overly kind approach to car handling has been what we loved about the previous Colin games, and we reckon the team are on to a winner handling-wise yet again.

Colin 3 will feature 4WD and 2WD cars and the game will support two-player split screen and possibly even four-player action. Thankfully, there will be an Australian track as Guy pointed out: "You Aussies are nutters for racing games and an Australian track is something you can safely assume will be included".

LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER: THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS

Next came the game we were all waiting for: Tomb Raider is set to go through its most major upheaval yet. At the start of the new game, which will be called *Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness*, Lara is going through a difficult time. Her circumstances are shrouded in controversy and she is on the run as she has found herself being accused of a grisly murder. This game, which is set in Paris, looks like representing a new direction for Lara, as the narrative has a much more grown up focus.

The team of 30 at Core headed by Adrian E Smith has been looking to give the game a more grown-up and in-depth focus and certainly judging by the footage we saw things have changed a lot. As you have probably heard, Lara will be running around Paris trying to clear her name and in the process she gets drawn into a sinister plot that sees her investigating the vast network of catacombs under the city and dealing with evil beings which many thought were mere myth and fantasy. Lara discovers that what is going on is very real and that there are spiritual forces at work which are not only a worry for Lara, but the rest of humanity as well.

Adrian is pretty excited about the game and has mapped out quite an

Colin McRae
3: faster,
bigger, better



involved future for Lara. As he says: "We'd like to put Lara in a situation which is alien to her. Her character is called into question and we wanted to go for a more mature, darker and deeper game. We were keen not to just bring a better looking game to the people, but we wanted to make the story more involving."

In this regard, there will be other

playable characters and this game is to be the first

In a series. The video we saw featured an evil looking German soldier as well as a Jack Ripper inspired character. In case you haven't heard the game will be exclusive to PlayStation 2 and it looks like being hugely exciting.

Next, it was time to head off to visit David Doak and the lads from Free Radical, who were putting the final touches to *Timesplitters 2*.

TIMESPLITTERS 2

Next to games like *Stuntman* and *V8*, this was one of the other shining stars on the tour. David Doak who is in charge of the project, took us through a demonstration of what is looking like the best 3D shooter to be headed your way this year. The most impressive aspect of the game when you play it for the first time is how much more work has been put into the single-player environments. David was very keen to stress that this was an area where they felt there was need for improvement and so a lot of new elements have been included. "The back story is that you are one of two marines who are chasing these Timesplitters who have gone back in the past with these crystals which are causing much havoc, and you must defeat the splitter and deal with the problems on each level."

Along the way, you deal with unique enemies and challenges, but there is also an overarching link to the plot that sees you going after the Timesplitter who is causing all of the trouble. The level we played saw us infiltrating a Russian facility set on a dam. There are many cool interactive elements in the game, as well as a host of new weapons. As David says: "We have tried to put in as much destructible scenery as well as elements like the pool table in the 1930's gangster level. With well aimed gunshots, you probably could play an actual game of pool which we find very amusing."

There are also weapons which are unique to each level and there are levels with Western themes: a level set in a Gothic French cathedral, a futuristic level and a few others which we didn't get to see. David also stresses that the game has a sense of humour: "We have monkeys and also characters like this Marty Feldman-inspired hunchback character in the Notre Dame Gothic horror level."

The 3D action played superbly and the gunfire is pretty manic. David added that a lot of work has been done to make the enemies more believable. "We are very pleased with the scripting work we have done. The AI is now much more comprehensive. In the previous game, there were enemy states of mind where they were either aware or unaware. We now have enemies who are unaware, cautious, afraid or searching for the player."

Timesplitters 2 was easy to play and you have a cool personal computer radar device that you carry with you and use to check enemy positions. You can't carry a weapon at the same time, however, so it's challenging to use because you have to be stealthy. The weapon effects and animation was pretty top notch and the whole game was smoother and better looking by a long way than the original. The game will ship with an editor, which will let you make and save your own levels.

The guys are also talking about a 'monkey assist' mode in deathmatch where a monkey runs into the fight from nowhere and shoots for you to try and save you from being taken out. *Timesplitters 2* is a game that is brimming with ideas and well-balanced gameplay and it is certainly in the box seat for the title of 'most anticipated single person 3D shooter' headed your way at the moment. Speaking of splitting we have had to scramble mighty fast out of the Free Radical offices in Nottingham and make a beeline for the airport in London, as we were late for the big trip back home, dreaming of the Smorgasbord of brilliant-looking games headed our way over the next year or so. Stay, as they say, tuned. □

MARTIN'S MUSINGS

"We wanted to create something which felt real but wasn't as real as real life. We wanted to really perform all of their driving stunts in one run. We thought it would be more fun to drive it that way though. We also wanted to make the game fun in that you can be the stunt driver on the set for a number of popular film styles. We have put a lot of effort into making the environment as real as possible. We have stuff like real time shadows draping over other objects as the car moves past, complex crash deformations and lots of objects you can hit as a part of the stunt sequences. We think this sort of mayhem will be what people will enjoy."





LOCK, STOCK 'N STUNTS

Wanna be in the movies? Acclaim's new *Stuntman* lets you test your nerve in some of the best movie stunts of all time. Have you got what it takes?



Heroes. We all want to be them, but we'd rather get the adulation and respect that comes from risking our life without the broken bones or lengthy stints in traction.

Stuntman, from the developers of *Driver*, lets us have a crack at being a hero behind the wheel while also performing some seriously cool stunts for a number of Hollywood blockbusters. OPS2 got to spend time one-on-one with the well-known Martin Edmondson from *Reflections* and managed to pull off some cunning stunts.

If you haven't heard of *Stuntman* yet, you will. This game is one of the best looking efforts headed to the PlayStation 2. Your task is to drive as the stunt man for a number of Hollywood productions. There are films based on classics like *Smokey and the Bandit*, 007's exploits, *Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*, John Woo's best efforts and there is even a touch of Indiana Jones as you dodge Nazis from behind the wheel of a Willy's Jeep.

There is so much about this game that will impress. You must perform a series of choreographed stunts and the game presents icons on the screen which make it clear which stunt you must do. Green boxes and arrows on the road indicating where you should go also help you immensely. Get a certain percentage of the stunts done in

time and you will complete a job and move on to the next. However, if you get a higher-than-basic percentage you will unlock new cars and other extras, so there is a decent incentive to do better once you have done the minimum. The game uses a rally-style stage progress bar to indicate which segments of a job you have completed properly (which is indicated by a green bar) or failed (indicated by red). This gives you a very accurate sense of how well you are doing, and if you need to try harder or if you are doing fine. There is also a stunt arena where you get a whole pile of different cars and jumps and other stuff to play with.

Driving in *Stuntman* is a lot of fun. The cars are very responsive and the physics engine feels very accurate. The stunts are particularly spectacular and burnouts, slides and handbrake turns can be performed with flair. There are a number of different views at your disposal and you will even have to snap to the rear view mode when you slam the car into reverse and have to jump backwards or hit other cars from behind. This is challenging and difficult, but it also feels unique. You will have to be very aware of your environment though and getting used to the different

vehicles on offer will also keep the gameplay fresh.

As for the vehicles, there are American muscle cars that look like the Mustang, and a host of other makes. Some of the funnier ones on offer may include a golf cart, a bus, a snowmobile, and an Asian style 'Jeepney' taxi. The stunt arena editor, which lets you place jumps and other obstacles around the track, is also very easy to use. *Stuntman* was so much fun we spent about three hours straight playing it. Locally, you will even be able to win a 1973 V8 Chev Camaro which is being done up in *Stuntman* livery. □

Starsky and Hutch would be proud ...



GENERATION

VEXX

He's small, he's cute, he's got a pair of talons for hands. OPS2 jets off to the US to meet Acclaim's dark platformer hero, Vexx. Daxter? He don't know Jak!



Jet black hair, blue eyes and Astani Battle Gauntlet hands, Vexx is more than a match for the forces of darkness.





Among other treats, Vexx's talons can generate localised blasts of energy to create forcefields, propel our hero forward and, um, attack large walking mushrooms.



Functionality is the basis of all of Vexx's design. This character's function is to make you mess yourself with fright. Apparently.



Maybe it's a Texan thing. When you think of platform game heroes you usually conjure up some saucer-eyed moppet with a day-glo Hugh Grant hair-do. A cute-as-a-button protagonist with a big heart, short legs and the kind of wholesomeness that you don't usually find outside of a John Farnham album or an All Bran

factory. And dammit, don't they always hang out in worlds with all the brooding menace of a blueberry muffin? So it's with some surprise that while brushing up on Vexx, Acclaim's upcoming platformer, OPS2 read the following section from the back story:

"With greater resolve, he reached for the gauntlets again and screamed as the ancient artifacts leapt onto his outstretched hands and began the bonding process that would prevent them from ever being taken off while their wearer was alive. Pain coursed down Vexx's arms, causing blazing points of light to appear before his vision."

Right. Scanning the remaining text looking for a comforting fix of 'flopsy bunnies', 'wacky sidekicks' or baked goods, there seemed to be a distinct lack of silver linings. There was a murdered grandfather, sure. Cackling writhes? You bet. But 'Pulsing pain' featured a fair bit, too. Crash, Mario, Banjo and the rest would be filling their collective dungarees faced with this kind of start in life. However, with his brooding eyes and lethal finger cutlery Vexx is made of sterner stuff. Then again, he does hail from the city of Austin in the Lone Star State, a contradictory place where, if you believe one grizzled local, the citizens' legendary charm and manners stems directly from the knowledge that almost anyone you talk to owns a gun, "so it's best to be polite."

SLIME, SNAILS AND PUPPY-DOG'S TAILS

Nice and nasty, sweet and sour, cute and cutting. It's an interesting mix and according to Greg Hargrove, Lead Artist on Vexx at Acclaim's Austin Studios, it's made for a refreshing approach to a well worn videogame genre. "A few of the guys on the team are into the Disney-style of character. Some of them actually came from Disney and Warner Brothers. And they were, 'Great! We're going to be able to make something for kids!' The early concept work reflected that. But now you've got a main character who is cute and harmless at one point and then becomes really dangerous. That's going to add a lot of depth. I like the contrast. Having some cutesy things in the world accentuates the bad stuff. So you'll have an area with trees that looks like a park, but as you get closer to the bad guy, you start getting really twisted environments and the tension builds. But even on the nice levels, at night, the music will change, the characters will change."

Sounds like the perfect time for a bit of scene setting. Are you sitting awkwardly? Good. Astara, so the story goes, was once a rich and vibrant planet until it was all but destroyed in an ancient war. Four life supporting fragments of the planet remained, and on one of these, the village of Rockhaven, stood for many years, its peaceful people struggling to make a life for themselves. A noble endeavour but one that is ultimately doomed when a Shadowwrath by the name of Dark Yabu descends with his troops, enslaving the good people of Rockhaven and setting them to work in the caves surrounding the village. One of these villagers, a young man called Vexx, resists the urge to rebel, but regrets his decision bitterly when his grandfather collapses,

Vexx contemplates a career as a professional goalie.



Whatever you can see, you can get to.



Unlike a lot of platform heroes, Vexx has a dark side to him.



Once again, Vexx fails quite miserably to pick on someone his own size.

How many people does it take to make a videogame? 30 if you really must know.

VEXX STATS

Vexx's features at a glance.

Game title: Vexx
Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Acclaim Studios Austin
Game type: Platform/Action adventure
Structure: 18 levels set in six distinct worlds with 24 potential objectives in each to complete.

Multplayer: Six different multiplayer party games hidden in the single-player game. Once unlocked they can be accessed from the menu at any time.

Special Features: Beat-'em-up-style combo-based fighting system. Vexx can swim, glide, climb and fire energy blasts. Environments and lifetimes in the game have two states: a benign daytime state and a hostile, aggressive night-time state.

literally worked to breaking point. Grief stricken, Vexx sneaks aboard Yabu's personal Wind Ship, where he discovers a pair of Astani Battle Gauntlets hidden in the Shadowwrath's quarters. One painful fusing session later, Vexx is bound to the only weapon capable of harming Dark Yabu. However, the process is a volatile one and it destroys the Wind Ship, showering the regions of Astara with the energy-giving orbs Yabu has been forcing the villagers to excavate. Infuriated, the Shadowwrath leaves Vexx for dead amid the smouldering wreckage, and takes the Rockhaven villagers with him.

Our hero awakes to find an old blind hermit called Darby by his side. The old man informs the whipper-snapper that Dark Yabu has taken his people to a towering structure called the Landspire, but without a Wind Ship, it will be impossible to follow. Unless... If Vexx can gather the orbs scattered around Astara he might be able to reactivate a system of inter-connected portals - the Astani Riftgate. One of these should take Vexx to the Landspire and to a confrontation with Dark Yabu. Armed (or should that be handed?) with the formidable gauntlets, Vexx sets off to free his people.

VEXX-PLANATIONS PLEASE

It looks like the days when 'leaping every which way but Sunday' collecting baubles is justification enough for playing a platformer are well and truly over. And that's just the story. Vexx also confirms that when it comes to finding inspiration for projects, developers are cultural magpies and the objects that catch their eye aren't always confined to the world of videogames. Of course, there are some - names like Mario, Crash and Sonic are bandied about as classic role models for Vexx. But the Street Fighter series, theme parks and Dreamworks animated feature, *The Prince Of Egypt*? Some explanation is definitely called for.

First off, the Street Fighter connection. Far from avoiding confrontation or defeating enemies in a decidedly lo-fi way by jumping on them, Vexx is going to be, well, tasty in a fight, serving up talon sandwiches for anyone or anything that might happen to be standing in the way of his ongoing quest. "The attack moves are derived from anime and classic fighting games," explains Nigel Cook, MD of Acclaim Studios Austin. "So you'll be able to use beat-'em-up-style combos and juggle enemies around." What's more, proving himself in fight situations will have a welcome side effect for your hero. "Basically if you don't have enough power, it's one way to get your health back up. Return to an area with baddies and beat them up." And the fringe benefits of Vexx's gauntlets don't stop with street fighting skills. At different times they'll grant him limited Invulnerability, the ability to 'power swim' (faster than a speeding haddock), glide, unleash blasts of localised energy for offense and propulsion. Oh yeah, let's not forget the ability to climb up sheer walls. With that little lot it's a wonder Vexx has any time left to collect any orbs en route.

And what about *The Prince Of Egypt*? It seems that the underrated



VEXX APPEAL

The movers and shakers in Vexx.

**VEXX**

Once Vexx was just your run of the mill cocky, brash, hot-headed teenager. Then Dark Yabu descended on his village enslaving the good people of Rockhaven. When an accidental discovery finds Vexx fused to a powerful pair of Astari Battle Gauntlets, the punk-ass kid rapidly attains punk-ass hero status and the scene is set for an almighty showdown with Dark Yabu. And with the help of Darby the hermit and Rela the Astana, you never know. He might just make it...

DARBY

Darby is a blind hermit with an occasionally tenuous grip on sanity who discovers young Vexx battered and unconscious in the wreckage of Dark Yabu's Wind Ship. Nursing Vexx back to good health, he begins to impart his vast knowledge of Astaran mythology and lore to the young lad. He also reveals the crucial information that an ancient system of portals exists, that they can be reactivated and that they will lead Vexx to the towering building called the Landspire. Who is the evil Shadowwrath Dark Yabu and Vexx's enslaved people? In short, Darby is the brains behind Vexx's brawn.

DARK YABU

As the most powerful of the Shadowwraths, Dark Yabu fought with his brethren against the noble Astani race many years ago when they inadvertently opened a rift between the living and the shadow realms. The Millennium War that ensued shattered the peaceful planet of Astari leaving the four fragment worlds that exist now. Dark Yabu wants to reopen the gateway to the shadow realm but has one remaining obstacle: A lone female Astara called Rela. Incidentally, Dark Yabu has the ability to change his shape which begs the question, "Why did he choose such an ugly one for daily use?"

RELA

Rela is the last of the Astani, a once-noble race who perished in the Millennium War against the Shadowwraths. A girl at the time Astara was shattered, Rela feels the guilt of her people who accidentally enabled the Shadowwraths to invade their world. As a result she has held a vigil for over a thousand years, attempting to stop Dark Yabu's every attempt to reopen the gateway to his world. In short, she's a goodie and wants to help Vexx reach the Landspire and destroy o' ugly features.

cartoon feature or more specifically, a sequence where hieroglyphic figures animate to tell a story, has become the imaginative springboard for one of the game's numerous mini-games. At one point, Vexx will enter the surface of a carved wall, whereupon the player will be treated to an inspired twist on old-skool scrolling 2D platform games.

With the development team dedicated to implementing off-the-wall thinking in a way that's positively Japanese, this example barely scratches the surface. For instance, there's a level set in a giant's castle. Inside you'll find a huge room complete with TV and videogame console set-up that you can activate and, balancing on the controller, play to your pint-sized heart's content. And that's not the strange bit. Climb up onto the piano (playing the keys as you walk, naturally), hop into the works and you're treated to an abstract musical level. Seemingly floating in space, Vexx must leap and climb up a series of musical instruments. And with each new drum, horn or guitar he lands on the soundtrack builds with that instrument's particular sound. You begin to appreciate just why the developers are so psyched about the game.

The inspiration provided by theme parks is, considering platform games' love of themed levels and areas, a little easier to nail down. But even here, there's an attempt to visit genre staples with fresh eyes. Take the game world's structure. By splitting Astara into four, adjacent islands floating in space, the developers can afford to make the distinct areas

versions of themselves. Take the humble Popper [a large worm that leaves Bugs Bunny-style dirt trails in its wake] for example. It's no looker in the daylight to put it mildly, but after bedtime it looks positively horrible. And what's more, it will actively hunt you down if you hang around. Thank goodness for the creation of hidden suns dotted around Astara that allow you to switch between night and day. It's an imaginative way to make the passage of time impact on gameplay. And save your bacon from marauding creatures of the night, of course.

It's interesting to note that despite entering the final stretch of development [two years down with an October release planned] the team seem remarkably calm. Perhaps they've cobbled together one of those sundials to monkey time around in their favour? Well, almost.

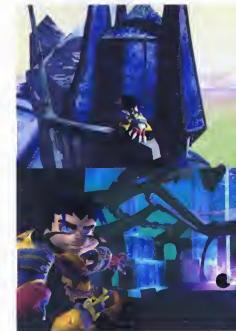
AUSTIN'S POWER

Unlike many developers, Acclaim is keen to develop its own software and design tools. Vexx is no different in that respect, either. A new engine and set of tools have been purpose-built specifically for this game and Acclaim Studios Austin's other big project, *Turok Evolution* [See OPS2#1]. Director of Product Development, Malc Crummack, explains that the advantages of this approach to game design are huge: "If you don't have the right tools at your disposal the game's not going to happen. Some of them are off the shelf, but the actual world-building software that we have to make Vexx with is our creation, we designed it here. We needed it to do specific things that other tools just don't do. That was a big learning experience for us too. The software has to facilitate world creation, and has to be able to evolve with the plans."

And with *Turok Evolution* using the same pool of technology as Vexx, both teams have benefited from each other's experience. The design tools have meshed with the philosophy that getting the fundamentals of gameplay right is the top priority. Everything else comes later. "The way we do it is to start simply, then add more detail. So even early on, it's raw geometry but it plays like it should play. Then we add the graphics, the effects and so on. We were playing the game on PCs a year ago at the very first stages, when the engines and the tools were all we had. And that way we could stay on the right track," concludes Crummack.

With designers able to edit graphics and textures in real-time without long periods waiting for changes to be rendered by the development kits, they've been free to experiment, creating mini-games and effects in minutes and hours rather than days. Science aside this is all potentially good news for gamers looking for more bang for their videogame buck.

Of course, no end of innovation and cutting edge design software is going to make it easy for Vexx to steal the PS2 'bounce and trounce' crown from Messrs Jak and Daxter, but it's a compliment to Acclaim's young hero that with almost a year of development remaining before release, Naughty Dog's duo are the only competition in sight. Not bad for a first attempt at a platformer. Not bad at all. □



Environments are extremely varied with little repetition of textures and features.



At night-time, the failing light causes creatures to transform into evil versions of themselves

fully free-roaming without having to worry about players walking into invisible walls at the edge of the map. Try that in Vexx and you won't find a glitch in the code, you'll literally fall off the edge of the world. And then there's the role of monuments. With such open environments it would be easy to get lost, or lose track of your objectives without prompting. But with a nod to Disney's fairytale castle, that won't be a problem in Vexx. Cook explains: "We've got a 3D system where you can see other worlds within the atmosphere, far away. I wanted it to be like a theme park in that you go in there and you might see a tower with a temple on top of it and you'll say, 'Some day I'll go there.' And it may take three days and it may take 20 minutes, but whatever you can see, you can to get to." These monuments also act as focal points for your adventure, so whichever of the game's 144 tasks you're trying to crack, and in whatever order you won't have to worry about getting lost.

You may, however, feel a little less relaxed about night falling. Vexx's world is filled with indigenous creatures, most of which will attack only if provoked during the day. Come the night, and it's a different matter. The failing light causes creatures to transform into evil and belligerent

WORDS/PHOTOGRAPHY: AMOS WONG

SAMURAI

The mind behind Capcom's epic historical horrorfest *Onimusha: Warlords*, producer Keiji Inafune, reveals the new heroes, vistas and game mechanics of the upcoming sequel. Nobunaga has returned – and he's more powerful than ever.

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 Corpses of soldiers in Sengoku-era armour lie dead, strewn across a skyscraper rooftop. Smoke lingers from their fierce battle and trails into the backdrop of modern day Shlnjuku. It's not something you see often, even in Tokyo. But then *Onimusha: Warlords*, 2, the ambitious and eagerly anticipated sequel to Capcom's now classic horror fighter, is something that producer Keiji Inafune is eager to publicise. And understandably so. Such powerful images, taken from his recent television advertising campaign, reveal just how much bigger and better *Onimusha* has become; refashioned, honed and enhanced for a joypad generation eager to take up the virtual samurai sword one more time.

In fact, it was *Onimusha*'s subtle fusion of fact, myth and outright fantasy – casting the player as feudal samurai Samanosuke Akechi, out to rescue Princess Yuki from the clutches of the evil warlord Nobunaga – wrapped up in exquisite period detail visuals, that made *Onimusha* such a hit. That and the fact that hero Samanosuke was modelled on Eastern media darling actor Takeshi Kaneshiro. Inafune-san boldly eschewed the characterless polygon protagonist typical of the *Street Fighter* series in favour of a fluid, flesh-and-blood hero that the (Japanese) player could really identify with.

DEAD ACCURATE

It was a gamble that paid off. But with the hero of *Onimusha: Warlords* 2, Jubel Yagyu, again based on a historical figure, the producer has taken an even bigger risk: using the likeness of the late, great thespian Yusaku Matsuda, a widely respected Japanese cultural icon, perhaps more familiar to Westerners as the rebellious Yakuza Sato in Ridley Scott's *Black Rain*.

"There are a number of fictional heroes based on this actor," Inafune tells OPS2, "and so many fan sites are dedicated to him. He's admired by practically everyone. I tried looking for a living actor, but the person had to be equal to, or more popular than Kaneshiro," says Inafune. "You know, he was a hardcore gamer and I had a lot of difficulty finding another actor with the same credentials. Matsuda's such a popular actor – even today the majority of people in their 20s and 30s are aware of him. He's legendary, kind of like James Dean."

But using his likeness demanded delicate negotiations with the



[Above] Meet Ekei, the drunken monk. Give him some mead to keep him onside.

[Below] Taverns are the ideal place to

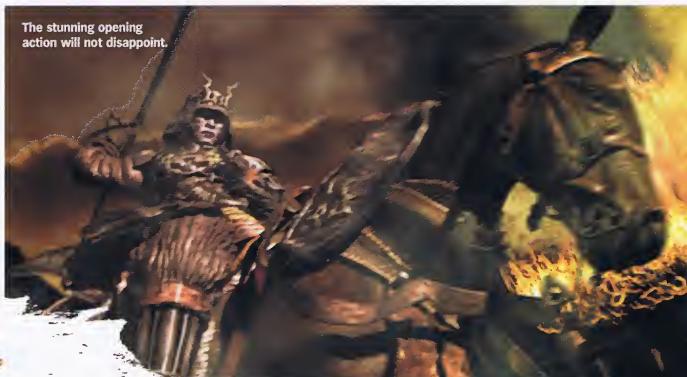
strike up an alliance with new characters.



Scattered towns lend *Onimusha 2* an almost RPG feel, while expressive cast performances impress.

If you think your weapon's not big enough, take a break from the action and go shopping.

ONIMUSHAS 2



The stunning opening action will not disappoint.



A rare moment of calm in Jube's village.



Friend or foe? You have to watch your back in Onimusha 2.



Onimusha 2 will better its predecessor in all respects!

Meany creatures abound
courtesy of Ameriya-san.



actor's family, particularly Matsuda's widow, who was completely unfamiliar with videogames and has total control over his property. Originally, she expressed concern with the use of her husband's likeness. Fortunately, the actor's son, Ryuhel, was fully behind the project. He is a hardcore gamer himself and thoroughly enjoyed the original *Onimusha*. "It was he who persuaded her to accept our offer," notes the producer.

Inafune paid considerable attention to portraying the late actor's expressions and body language. "He's so well known, it's essential that we don't break his image for his fans," explains the producer. "But conversely as a game you can't make motion too realistic – it doesn't always equal excitement in terms of gameplay. You need to make it look convincing without slowing down the action for the sake of creating a totally 'real' performance."

FULL OF CHARACTER

The story behind Capcom's upcoming 16th-century slashfest remains as distinctive and harrowing as its predecessor's. After a terrible storm, chieftain Jubel returns to his village to find it decimated. He soon learns the nefarious Nobunaga is behind the act and, with ogre blood coursing through his veins, swears vengeance against the warlord and his demonic minions. This time, however, he's joined in his quest by four new characters, all of whom also crave the death of Nobunaga: mysterious swordswoman

Oyuu; gunslinger Magolchi; young ninja Kotaro; and monk Ekel, who incongruously has a penchant for wine and women. These new characters, plus a revamped storyline, reflect a conscious policy by Inafune to overhaul *Onimusha*'s dynamics.

"Players always look for something different in a sequel, yet they also require all the good points and excitement of the first game," notes Inafune. "I already had a vague idea for a sequel before

Onimusha was even released, but after it became a hit we strove to make this superior to the original."

The introduction of new characters should add extra depth to the gameplay: "You can expand the story line by communicating with the support characters. In other words, if you try to make the story more elaborate and complicated, you can do so. The ending's fixed, but the path you can take to get there is more varied. It depends on you interacting or helping out the supporting characters, and making them form some kind of attachment towards you. Through that process, the story can become much more dramatic. Some may die in the middle of the story, or they can betray you. The love story aspect could also become more intense."

As a result, winning the affections or loyalty of others is of vital importance in *Onimusha 2*. Offer Oyuu a bottle of imported wine, for example, and her face lights up as she gushes thanks. Ingratiate yourself well enough with one of your group and you can eventually use them as a playable character.

Foe-wise, the mythological bestiaries of olde Japan have been mined still further. To help design the creatures, which the producer felt didn't quite match up to expectation in the first title ("they weren't convincing enough," he says) Inafune sought the help of renowned character designer Keita Ameriya: "I decided to use Ameriya-san in this project, because when it comes to designing monsters based on legendary Japanese creatures, he's the best."

From what we've seen to date, Ameriya has clearly let his imagination run wild: among his many monstrous creations are a

Ingratiate yourself well enough with one of your group and you can use them as a playable character

Cast interaction provides the game's increased sense of drama.

More of those beautifully rendered monsters. They're easier to kill if they're frozen.



towering mechanical behemoth made of wood, and what can only be described as a demonic pig woman in a red kimono and exotic head dress.

However, Inafune has one particular favourite from Amemiya's exhaustive designs – Jubel's arch rival, Gogandantess. "He's human in form and appears many times throughout the game, gets defeated but keeps on coming back," he laughs. "His attitude and personality is very unique, almost weird. I'm sure many gamers will like him!"

RESIDENCE EVIL

It's not just friends and foes who've had an extensive makeover, though. Even *Onimusha*'s already impressive game milieu has been enhanced. That foreboding, overrun castle makes a welcome return, for instance, and this time there's a gold-mining town to explore. "It was conceived to make the game more enjoyable," explains Inafune. "If there's gold to be found, it attracts violent, ambitious characters and creates conflict." And the castle? "Overall, it's a lot bigger than in the first game," admits the producer, "and there will also be an island inhabited by the ogres [the 'Oni'] who endow Jubel with his special powers to fight the demons."

Fighting, too, has undergone a few enhancements – with close-quarters combat, one of the original *Onimusha*'s great strengths, still at the heart of the *Onimusha* 2 experience. New weapons include an ice-transforming spear, which Jubel can wield against opponents, incarcerating them in a block of ice, which he can then shatter into a million fragments. Used well, the effect is very satisfying. When prompted for further details, however, Inafune is tight-lipped, although he does reveal a sliver of information about a mallet. "It could end up being one of the game's most popular weapons," he muses, because of its unusual slamming action.

"Of course, all the weapons from the first game will be enhanced and more powerful," he adds. "You can charge each weapon before attacking enemies to inflict more damage from a single blow. There's also 'Ultimate Art' – a special move that's specific to each weapon. It's executed with a sequence of commands, but it won't be as complicated as you get in fighting games."

GRAPHIC EVOLUTION

Onimusha astonished players with its rich visual palette; *Onimusha* 2 goes one better. Take the sequence that introduces the supporting characters, for instance, which is quite simply breathtaking. "This time I wanted to achieve an opening that could only be expressed by computer graphics," explains Inafune. "So I deliberately turned to Japanese arts, like Noh theatre, where actors perform in front of gorgeous, flashy backgrounds." The monk Ekel leads the segment, swinging his spear in a courtyard amidst falling cherry blossoms. Suddenly, the scene rotates, as if it's a giant stage set, deconstructs in a blink, and then reforms as a castle roof bathed in moonlight for ninja Kotaro's entrance. The way these 'sets' segue into the next defies reality; it's a perfect fusion of traditional arts and digital aesthetic.

With experience gleaned from the first game, the development team has been pushing the realism and atmosphere of the game environments further than ever before, incorporating even more animated touches and effects. In Jubel's village, for example, you can see sheets of cascading rain and a split-second overexposure effect as lightning strikes. It's pure Kurosawa. Look more closely and you'll notice thin sheets of water running over the ground and



Japan's James Dean, Yusaku Matsuda.



EVEN BETTER THAN THE REAL THING

How did the team digitise Matsuda without the man himself being there? Producer Keiji Inafune explains...

"Even for *Onimusha*, the cast taken of Kaneshiro wasn't perfect," says Inafune. "You can't replicate a person's features for a game... by taking a mould of his face. Then we'd do a lot of modifications made to the 3D model and that experience helped a lot in creating Matsuda's likeness in *Onimusha* 2."

"The most helpful process was that Yusaku Matsuda's widow came all the way over to our office and gave the designers a lot of advice. She made suggestions, like placing his eyes a little bit closer or making his nose a bit higher, and so on."

Upon completing the game, the prospect of being able to play as the legend in one of his most famous roles was too good for Inafune to let slip. Armed, and decked out in round sunglasses, a smart hat and suit from the TV series *Tomei Monogatari* [Detective Story], Matsuda metres some serious punishment out to the bad guys. With a big stick.



Keiji Inafune is already busy with *Onimusha* 3, but won't spill the beans just yet.



Screenshots can't do justice to *Onimusha* 2's lush environments.



Enter the gold mine for more varied action and meet some unscrupulous and underhand foes.

ONIMUSHAS 2



A fan of *Onimusha*, Ryuhei Matsuda was the key to his father's casting and is heavily involved in the sequel's promotion.



Expect epic scale battles in even more exotic settings than the original.

Monstrous creations include a ~~demonic pig woman in a red kimono and exotic head dress~~

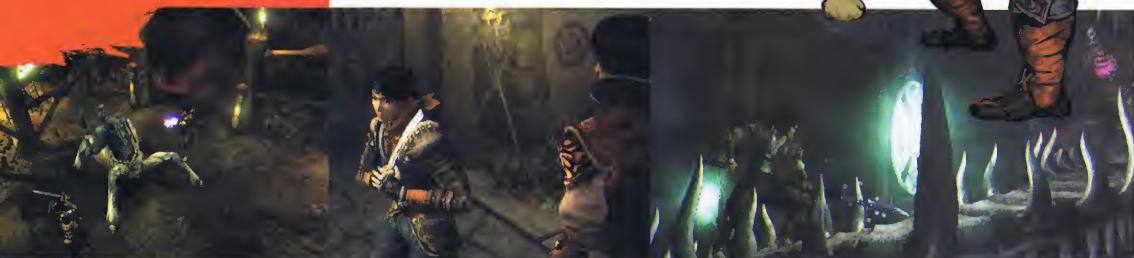
flowing off the roofs, complete with rain droplet splash effects. During a beach confrontation, gentle waves lap the sandy shore.

"The challenge was deciding which part of the background I wanted to animate," remarks Inafune. "Technically, it wasn't too difficult to do, but rendering them was really time consuming. You'd have to wait for so many hours for just one screen. When you decide to animate a part of the background, it has to run at 30 frames per second, which means you have to create a similar background screen 30 times. So I had to choose carefully which elements would give the most impact for the players."

The result, from what we've seen so far, will be worth the wait. A full 12 months on from the release of *Onimusha*, *Onimusha 2* found its way onto Japanese shelves on 7 March. Work on the sequel was started before the original title reached the shops, so confident were Inafune and his team that they had a uniquely winning formula in their hands. Which begs the question: Is a number three underway yet?

"Yes," is the reply – and from his smile you just know that's all he's going to reveal. Speculation about *Onimusha 3* starts here. □

True to the Japanese history books, Yagyu's village really was destroyed by Nobunaga.



Relationships with the support characters will vary depending on the assistance you give them.

Battle scenes are enshrouded with sumptuous graphics and atmospheric effects.

Reviews Charter

FACT: OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE'S reviews are the best in the business. Our crack squad of reviewers play the games longer, harder and better than anyone else. And we absolutely love what we do.

It's this dedication that means you can trust our scores above anyone else's. Whether a game's superb or sewage, our experts will tell it like it is with buckets of opinion rather than a few cheap gags and some PR nonsense. Our experienced reviewers have written for the game's industry's most revered publications, both here and abroad. What's more, our writers have plenty of 'heritage' in the industry, having a collective history spanning into decades. Rest assured that these are opinions you can trust.

Next time you head off to spend your hard-earned cash on a PlayStation 2 game, make sure you read our reviews first.

Review Ratings

Here's what our review scores stand for:

- 10/10** Night on revolutionary. A game that could change the face of gaming forever
- 9/10** A truly astonishing game. If you have a PlayStation 2, you need this now
- 8/10** Highly recommended
- 7/10** Good, solid fare that's definitely well worth a look
- 6/10** Better than average, and ideal for hardcore fans of the genre
- 5/10** An average game
- 4/10** Poor, but still with the odd moment
- 3/10** Extremely disappointing
- 2/10** To be avoided
- 1/10** Beer mat

The OPS2 Awards

We don't hand out high scores for nothing so when you see one of these, you'll know it's a sign of quality. Look for them on game boxes.



The Gold Award is a rare gem and only to be given to PS2 games that score that magic 10/10. The only game to get Gold is MG2. Too right!

The Silver Award is for games that receive 9/10. If you see this, it's a sign of star quality, indicating that you should buy this game now!

The Bronze Award is for games that score 8/10. These games are highly recommended and are 100% guaranteed to satisfy.

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4 066

Hand-to-hand combat in an arcade perfect conversion.

media

DVD / INTERNET / PRINT / MUSIC

DVD RELEASES 080

A.I./Training Day/Marathon Man/Monty Python and the Holy Grail/Harry Potter/Doctor Who/Dracula 2000/Top 10 Tom Cruise DVDs

STAR WARS: RACER REVENGE

070

Pod Racing speed freak that's even faster this time around.

RED CARD 2003

072

A welcome break from the *FIFAs*, *PES* and *UEFAs* of this world.

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2002

074

ALL STAR BASEBALL 2003

075



ps one™

The latest titles for the little grey fella



FINAL FANTASY ANTHOLOGY 078



REVIEW

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4



Publisher: SCEA

Developer: Sega AM2

Price: \$99.95

Players: 1-2

Out: May 10

Web site: www.sega-am2.co.jp/vf4

60Hz mode: Yes

Widescreen: No

Surround sound: No



As Ang Lee recently proved with the dazzling *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, kung fu entertainment doesn't have to involve dumb storylines and ridiculous characters. It can be intelligent, and it can look beautiful. The *Virtua Fighter* series is sort of like the *Crouching Tiger* of the beat-'em-up world: it's never stooped to include magical fireballs (*Street Fighter*), or girls with enormous breasts (*Dead or Alive*). It simply simulates a range of real martial arts as realistically as possible, with a cool, diverse selection of fighters. But, wait — take a look at the screenshots. Nothing this beautiful could ever be described as simple; in fact, it's complex. 'Mind-bendingly complex' hits the nail just about on the head.

But first, a technical point. As we're the first magazin to get hold of the genuine PAL version of the game (instead of fobbing you off with a disguised NTSC review) we can confirm some important details. Sega — thank the Lord — has provided a 60Hz option. Which means if you have a 60Hz compatible TV you can play the game at the full, as-God-intended 60 frames per second.

Okay, so what if you've got your PAL/NTSC issues sorted, but you're worried about coming into a fighting game series in its fourth instalment? Well, don't be. The most important thing about *Virtua Fighter* 4 is that it positively embraces newcomers. Most fighting games these days expect you to have a PhD in beat-em-upology. It's like going along to your local karate class for a casual lesson and finding Jackie Chan, Sonny Chiba and Jet Li warming up and trading in-jokes. That is not good design!

Back story

Ten years ago, Yu Suzuki set out to design a game that used true 3D visuals to replicate human movement. The result was *Virtua Fighter*, a polygonal take on the fighting game genre that ushered in a new era of realistic human simulation. Since then, AM2 has exploited each new generation of technology, improving visuals and adding depth to the combat repertoire. *Virtua Fighter* 4 is the culmination of that process. Well, for now at least.



VIRTUA FIGHTER 4

The daddy of the 3D fighting game is back and looking better than ever.

So with *Virtua Fighter 4*, AM2 has included a proper Training mode, split into three sections. Just pick the character you want to master and then choose Command, Free or Trial. The first guides you through each move in your fighter's repertoire, showing the button presses and demonstrating what should happen when you get it right. Free is just the standard training arena equipped with a dummy opponent. Finally, Trial gives you a series of objectives, each dealing with different elements of a standard fight – striking, blocking, countering, throwing and so on. You'll gradually develop a rounded, highly strategic approach to combat and after a few hours you'll begin to understand how moves link together; how certain sequences are shared between all the fighters and – vitally – how blocking and bluffing are just as important as pulling off mega-damage combos.

Repeatedly hitting punch and kick might beat your mates, but it won't get you far in Kumite (a blisteringly challenging single-player mode which pits you against a long series of challengers as you rise from lowly 10th Kyu, all the way up to 10th Dan).

GAME OF DEPTH

Each attacking move can be broken down into three stages: execution (the time it takes to perform the move), the impact itself and then the time it takes for the attacker to recover. You can get a response in at the latter stage (ie, after you've been smacked) but the best thing to do in this situation is to counter while your opponent is still at the executing point, thereby getting in a block or a hit of your own before they even strike. Gradually, the emphasis shifts from blindly flailing at the other fighter, to reading their moves and remembering which subtle hand, leg or body twists lead to which attacks. And even this isn't the end of it. Characters also have moves which feign one form of attack (say a high kick) but then deliver the opposite (perhaps a low jab). So in effect, the game grows with you and the challenge extends to meet your experience.

As for the aggressive side of the game there is obviously much to learn here, too. This is where the infamous combo comes in. Each VF4 character has a huge range of 'ready made' combos – strings of kicks and punches which form powerful and visually impressive sequences. However, observant players will also notice that your fighter ends some moves and combos in a stance that other moves

and combos begin with. So in effect, you can begin to piece together your own sequences, to create totally individual attacks. Then you can start to explore midair combos which take advantage of certain kicks and punches that leave your opponent momentarily hovering in the air. And smashing people repeatedly against the wall with sweeps, knee jabs and low kicks is always fun.

You also get some astonishing visceral moves, like Kage's Izuna Otoshi throw in which he lobs opponents high into the air, somersaults backward, catches them on their way down then slams them into the ground. Or what about Jeffy's choice little move where he grabs a fighter, lifts the poor bugger high over his head, then smashes him (or her – he isn't sexist) over his knees?!

WAY OF THE DRAGON

Learning to read and appreciate the individual styles of the fighters is made so much easier by the beautiful character design and animation. Here, the differences between competitors run much deeper than mere lists of moves – every fighting style comes with its own unique stances, and subtly different body movements. You'd know Lion used mantis-style kung fu just by looking at his claw-like hand and wrist positions, and his leaping stabbing attacks. Meanwhile, through Jacky, you can glimpse the origins of Bruce Lee's Jeet Kune Do – especially the moves influenced by Muhammad Ali. For example, Jacky has a combo that lets him quickly shuffle backwards before darting forward with a heavy jab to the body – a clear reference to Ali's float like a butterfly, sting like a bee! philosophy. Then you have the perfectly balanced, Zen-like stances of Lei-fel, a shaolin monk, and the lumbering advances of Jeffy, who's fighting style is half-wrestling, half-boxing.

When the fighters meet, the Impact is almost palpable. One problem with 3D fighters in the past was the dodgy collision detection between roughly defined polygon models. Often bits and pieces of one fighter would appear through another if they got too close. Even in modern titles, there can be awkward gaps when limbs collide. Very rarely are there such inconsistencies in *Virtua Fighter 4*. The animation is as smooth as freshly split blood and the interaction is authentic. You hear bones snap, you feel lungs collapse. Even the subtlest of holds manoeuvres make solid contact. Strangely, and with accompanying gout, it all adds to the fun.

BIG BOSS

She's hard, she's skilful, and she's see-through! Following true *Virtua Fighter* tradition, the Arcade mode ends with a showdown against merciful cyborg fighter, Dural. She appears invisible in Easy mode, but gains substance if you challenge her in Normal or Hard. She combines attacks from several different fighters.



1. In Easy mode, Dural can only just been seen. Which, come to think of it, isn't very easy at all.



2. Take on Arcade mode in Normal or above and she appears as a kind of female Silver Surfer.



3. Should you find a metallic videogame character sexy? No, it's possibly the saddest thing you could admit to.



Between bouts Jeffy tries out some chiropractic therapy on Jacky.

REVIEW

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4

This bloke would take Jeff Fahey to the cleaners.



And, of course, every character is immaculately dressed. It's just breathtakingly detailed: robes and skirts billow in the wind, jackets and shirts boast detailed patterns and inscriptions. Everything from the embroidered dragons on Pai's lovely satin shirt to Jacky's slogan-smeared leather jacket... every fabric, every fashion, every traditional garment is rendered with authenticity. Fans of sartorial splendour will be thrilled by the huge number of different outfit available to each fighter – see Enter The Drag Act for more details.

There are 14 initially available locations – one for each character plus a special extra. It's eye candy at its sweetest. The dramatic Colosseum with its ominous clouds and lightning strikes that explode statues in the background. The serene Shrine with its cherry blossom and quaint ancient Japanese-style gazebos. The Temple drenched in golden sun that flares across the screen. The Garden with its circling leaves. There are also moments of interaction – like on the Castle stage where marks left in the snow remain, and on the Palace arena, where the fight takes place in an ornamental pond, and water splashes up. All very picturesque.

Veterans of Virtua Fighter 3 may have a few grumbles. In that episode, most of the arenas were multi-levelled so fighters could use the high ground to gain more devastating attacks. Here, the surface is always flat, and, apart from the walls on some of the environments, none of the background has any bearing on action.

Perhaps this is all part of AM3's drive to get back to basics. The Escape command (an extra button that was brought in for VF3) that allowed fighters to quickly dodge left or right is gone, too. You can still use up and down and sidestep, but the breadth offered by escape is gone. Perhaps Yu Suzuki felt it was an embellishment too far. Whatever the reason is for this, newcomers will not feel disadvantaged, even if some old timers feel that an element has suddenly been torn away from them as quickly as it was offered.

SHOPPING AROUND

As for game modes, few beat-'em-up veterans will be disappointed (unless you *really* can't do without team battles). Along with the standard Versus and Arcade options are Kumite, Training, AI and Edit Kumite, mentioned earlier, is a variation on the old Career mode. Before you start this one its best to go into Edit and select a character to become your own personal fighter. Now, when you pick



ENTER THE DRAG ACT

EACH CHARACTER BOASTS A HUGE RANGE OF ALTERNATE COSTUMES AND ACCESSORIES WHICH CAN BE COLLECTED BY FIGHTING YOUR WAY THROUGH THE MAIN KUMITE MODE. SOME ARE COOL, SOME ARE CAMP, SOME ARE JUST PLAIN WEIRD.



1. After a few successful fights with Sarah, she gets some cool shades, a classy gold earring and an A-ha-style leather wristband. For true Eighties chic!



2. Somehow Jeffry seems so much less scary when he's dressed in tie-dyed shorts and flip-flops. After this bout, he's off to Ibiza.



3. Aoi's oriental-style flared trouser suit surely inhibits some of her more extravagant throws and kicks. The garish turquoise is not pleasant.



4. And finally, on Sarah's sartorial journey she meets Akira in his all-in-one purple number. He looks like a big bar of chocolate.

up an extra bit of clothing, or get promoted from one ranking to another, all the info will be saved onto your data file. You can now save him/her onto Memory Card and show off at your mate's.

The AI mode is a weird one. This allows you to go into the gym and train up a computer controlled fighter with all the moves and techniques you've learned. When you've convinced your little Ralph Macchio is ready, you can pit him against real computer-controlled fighters. It's sort of like owning a Pokémon, but with added mind-numbing violence.

MASTER WITH CRACKED FINGERS

Virtua Fighter 4 is not a game for casual post-pub pugilists. Learning this stuff takes time. Timing is a vital factor – the three-stage sequence in VF (execution, hit, recovery) is actually timed in frames – each stage may only take 20 frames of animation. That's a third of a second. If you want to get in counters and blocks, you need to think quickly. The temptation will always be there to start hammering at the buttons. This is the path to the dark side.

It would be foolish to claim that Virtua Fighter 4 is arcade perfect – the coin-op runs on Sega's NAOMI2 hardware which is so powerful it is probably only a nudge away from developing sentient intelligence and building an army of cyborgs to kill us all. However, you have to look pretty closely to notice the differences.

So will Virtua Fighter 4 become the grand master? Let's put it this way, Tekken has had a hell of a fight on its hands after dominating the PlayStation fighting arena for seven years. Remember: kung fu is for life, not just for Christmas. □ Keith Stuart

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4

Why we'd buy it:

- Lovely visuals
- Realistic moves
- It'll take years to master

Why we'd leave it:

- No crazy fireball moves
- You really, *really* have to put the hours in

A fine example of its creed and the only choice for gamers who want a long lasting single-player challenge. Beat-'em-up haters will not be converted, though.

| | | |
|-----------|------------------------------------|----|
| Graphics | Really quite astonishing in places | 09 |
| Sound | Ah, the authentic yelps of pain | 08 |
| Gameplay | Deeper than Hamlet | 08 |
| Life span | Lasts longer, too | 09 |



PlayStation 2 VERDICT



Feel nothing.



Feel everything.

Experience every bump and bend as you take to the track with a Logitech® Driving Force steering wheel. It features realistic force-feedback, foot pedals and even a moulded lap attachment so you can play from your favourite driving seat. And it's compatible with the latest PlayStation® 2 games such as

Gran Turismo™ 3: A-spec and World Rally Championship™ with more great new titles coming soon. Make sure you don't let anything get between you and the ultimate driving experience.



PlayStation.2



REVIEW

STAR WARS: RACER REVENGE



Bonus art galleries of ugly aliens can be unlocked.



STAR WARS: RACER REVENGE

Gentlemen, alien creatures of all descriptions... Start your engines!

Publisher: EA
Developer: LucasArts
Price: \$99.95
Players: 1-2
Out: Now
Web site: www.lucasarts.com
60Hz mode: No
Widescreen: No
Surround sound: Yes



Few would argue that the pod racing sequence is one of the best bits of *The Phantom Menace*. Hardly surprising then that the videogame arm of the Lucas empire turned it into *Star Wars: Racer* for N64 and now into *Star Wars: Racer Revenge* for PS2. It's not just a rehash of the old cartridge game, though. Instead, it's an all new, highly polished title with original tracks, extra pods and a blistering turn of speed.

The events of *Racer Revenge* are set eight years after the first game, so it features a polygonal Hayden Christensen as Anakin Skywalker. Imagine, if you will, that the ponytailed Padawan has sneaked away from his Jedi training to compete in the new pod racing season. The rebellious teen is just one of over 16 different pod pilots that you can select for any one of the game's three main modes – Single Play, Versus and Tournament. Single Play lets you compete in a one-off race on any of the available tracks. This option also allows

you to practise a track or race against the clock in a time trial. The Versus mode is self-explanatory and allows two players to hurtle against each other (and six other AI-controlled racers) in a vertical or horizontal split-screen race.

FEEL, DONT THINK...

The real meat of the game is the Tournament mode, a 13 track season that encompasses three minicompetitions. After selecting any one of the available pod racers (new characters are unlocked as you win races in this mode) you compete in back-to-back contests over five planets. To progress to the next track, you need to zoom home in third place or above. Fail to finish in the top three and you simply re-race until you're good enough. Crucially, the higher you finish, the more money (Truguts) you earn. Destroying racers can also earn you extra cash – each pod can only endure a certain amount of jostling and crashing before it needs to be repaired.



A crowded start – so hit the turbo boost and bump 'n' bash your way to the front.

Almost there... The Boonta Eve Classic track is one of the toughest in *Racer Revenge*.

TOP OF THE PODS

The Tournament mode gives you the opportunity to pick a racer and guide him (or in most cases 'it') through a 13 race season. Here's how it works:



Ben Quadjinoros pilots a four-engined pod. While this extra thrust gives him some good acceleration, his uncustomised machine has a slow top speed and poor armour plating.



Entering the first competition, the Mos Espa Open, the technical limitations of Ben's pod aren't too much of a hindrance. Three laps, some conservative boosting and victory!



Pick up 2,200 Truguts for winning and you can then invest the cash on pod improvements. More acceleration? Better armour? Increase the top speed? You decide, then it's onto the next race.



The higher a pod's Defense, the more damage it takes.

Each pod has its own handling characteristics, but they can be customised and improved.

The more races you win in Tournament mode, the more new racers you unlock.

OUTER RIM RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Compete against weirdly-named alien racers [such as Shriek Bratstrand, Occo Ninebar and Dull Bolt] across five planets and 13 different tracks.



Tatooine
Skywalker's home planet: familiar desert sands, twisting canyons and triple-trappy Tusken Raiders. Tatooine features the *Booda Eve Classic* track that appeared in Star Wars: The Phantom Menace. Can you beat the cheating Sebulba?



Mon Calamari
A water-based planet, all organic architecture in pretty pastel shades. Here you'll race in glass tunnels below the ocean before spiralling down into the giant ballast tanks that keep the capital city of the Sullustans afloat.



Gamorr
A forest planet, where pod racing is like playing Colin McRae Rally in a Forest Focus that can hover and travel at 600mph. Just to make things even more difficult, one of the Gamorr races takes place at night and in the pouring rain.



Sullust
A volcanic gas planet. Its inhabitants have built their cities underground in a series of huge caverns. This gives the Sullust racetracks a techno-industrial theme and means they are full of tight tunnels and passageways.



Ryloth
The harsh planet doesn't rotate, so half of it is perpetually cloaked in darkness and the other half faces constant blinding sunlight. The inhabitants of Ryloth live in a temperate zone between the two extremes. The tracks reflect this.



Buy the game, live the movie. Recognise these from the pod race in Episode II?

Junk dealer Watto will increase your winnings by a percentage depending on how many competitors you wipe out. Money gained can then be used to improve your racer. Each pod has its own set of handling characteristics, measured by six gauges: Acceleration, Top Speed, Handling, Defence, Repair and Cooling. You can improve these six technical areas by buying new parts at Watto's junk shop. Improving your racer's top speed will increase your chances of winning, while upping its defence level will strengthen the pod against damage. Similarly, spending your hard-won Trugrots on repair will shorten the time it takes for any damage to be patched up, while improving the cooling system will allow you to use the turbo boost longer. These elements combine to make a racing game that's involving and exciting to play.

Surprisingly, the feeling of raw speed in the early races is disappointing. But once you've souped up your pod, the gameplay gets faster and harder, and the racers are more aggressive. From the forests of Gamorr to the canyons of Tatooine, you fight to maintain your speed as you twist and turn around the courses. Faster. There are multiple pathways and corner-cutting short cuts. And faster! Rival racers violently jostle for position, actively ramming you off the track into trees or walls. And faster! You don't have time to think, you simply react, anticipating that next bend, dodging that boulder, juggling the boost and repair functions to stay ahead of the pack.

Still, controlling a pod doesn't get much more complicated than accelerate, brake and steer. An extra turbo button allows limited bursts of acceleration, while pressing the repair button sacrifices engine power to devote energy to fixing any pod damage. Four main camera angles are

available [from a zoomed-out perspective to an cockpit one] plus a rear-looking wing-mirror view.

Racer Revenge is big on atmosphere. The main Star Wars theme is guaranteed to turn heads, while the races are a roar of howling engines, screeching turbos and inane chatter from the alien commentator. As for the graphics, they are good, but you'll wish they were better on the five planets, each with its own environment: water, desert, forest and so on. But, despite large arrows, it's often difficult to see where to hurtle next. In the split-screen Multiplayer mode it's almost impossible. There are also some nice effects: smoking engines, rain, dust kicked up on desert tracks. Holding down the turbo boost, meanwhile, blurs the screen to simulate instant, rocket-powered acceleration [although, the resulting haze makes it difficult to see anything]. Slick, playable and, at times, captivating. Racer Revenge is also too easy. We completed the Tournament mode in half a day. But with further racers to unlock, hidden extras to find and lap records to beat, it's a game that can be replayed for as long as you feel that need for speed. □ Dean Evans

Once you've souped up your pod, the gameplay gets faster and more aggressive



Rival racers violently jostle for position, actively ramming you off the track into trees or walls. And faster!

Buy the game, live the movie. Recognise these from the pod race in Episode II?

Buy the game, live the movie. Recognise these from the pod race in Episode II?



STAR WARS: RACER REVENGE

Why we'd buy it:

- Blink-and-you'll-crash gameplay
- Superbly atmospheric
- Everybody loves Star Wars, don't they?

Why we'd leave it:

- too easy!
- The 3D is hardly breathtaking

Nothing wrong with the rocket-powered gameplay, but you don't need Jedi reflexes to finish it.

| | | |
|-----------|---|----|
| Graphics | Rally-style 3D, good feeling of speed | 07 |
| Sound | Stirring score spot-on effects | 09 |
| Gameplay | Unbelievably fast, Wipeout-style racing | 07 |
| Life span | It's all over far too quickly | 05 |

| |
|----|
| 07 |
| 09 |
| 07 |
| 05 |

PlayStation 2 VERDICT



RED CARD SOCCER 2003

Taking a major step away from the conservative ways of tradition soccer sims, this action-fest kicks a winner!

Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Midway
Price: \$9.95
Players: 1-4
Out Now
Web site: www.midway.com
60Hz mode: No
Widescreen: No
Surround sound: No

Back story

US company Midway has a long history in the world of videogames and has become renowned for its unconventional way of approaching their subjects - particularly sports. The company's console projects include *Ready 2 Rumble*, *NFL Blitz*, *Arctic Thunder*, *NBA Hoopz* and *Mortal Kombat* and all of these titles have been recognised for their extreme nature and intense speed. *Red Card 2003* is the latest to get the OTT, extreme treatment and has already proven to be fantastic multiplayer fun.



OPS2 has a strong feeling that *Red Card 2003* represents exactly what Americans wish soccer was or could be, but isn't and never will be! It's flashy, fast and it relies on massive hits, collisions and frantic gameplay.

Just as its serious nature makes Konami's *Pro Evolution Soccer* really shine, *RC 2003* is a winner way down the other end of the scale. Some soccer or football purists will turn in their graves after seeing what's on offer here, but regardless it cannot be denied that this chaotic 'take' on the world game is a thrilling experience and one that's set to become a firm favourite amongst mates after a night out on the town.

If you're after a soccer game, don't confuse the issue. *RC 2003* is not trying to compete with the likes of *FIFA PES* or *This Is Football*. While most of the major rules of the sport have been maintained, everything else has been thrown out the window. Intentional fouls, wild shots at goal and filthy tactics form the major part of the game. They're not subtle in the approach either. If you're not dirty I think Socceros Kevin Muscat and Danny Tiatto and multiply by 150!, then you won't have a chance at winning. Similarly, traditional tactics have also been thrown out the window.

Multiplayer action is certainly the highlight, but the single-player aspect is no slouch either. While it doesn't quite hold the same sustained value (as the modes are limited to just a handful of tournaments), you'll find plenty of enjoyment barreling defenders out of the way and knocking the keeper down with rocket-charged shots if you are going solo.

OPS2 has had some mammoth sessions that were ultra-competitive and hilarious fun at the same time. We'll certainly be heading back for more - we're just worried we'll forget where we are going solo.

next time we really do take to the pitch!

If criticisms are to be levied, it's the scoring system that can be singled out. It's slightly too difficult, and success is only really ever achieved when you manage to pick up a rebound from the keeper. Unfortunately, this is the weakest part of the experience and begins to make the game suffer over time.

It's also interesting to note that you can actually have players sent off. The foul would have to be the most blatant of the blatant to attract your marching orders though, and playing conservatively is only robbing yourself of the fun.

Surprisingly, real world stadiums, international teams and players have all been included, so all of your favourite players are in there. They don't look like they've been properly modelled, but they don't all have massive heads with green mohawks either. Games are all 11 on 11 as well, so you can expect a full complement of players.

The pace of the game is the highlight and the power generated in some shots is a sight to see.

This is certainly a great game that is sure to please gamers looking for something fresh and different. After all, soccer has always been a contact sport, hasn't it?

□ Richie Young

RED CARD SOCCER 2003

Why we'd buy it

- To go with the beer and nuts on the weekend
- For a light-hearted change after a mammoth PES session

Why we'd leave it

- Because we're uptight 'football' fans
- We hate pain
- We hate fun

One of the best sports games we've seen for a while and very easy to 'pick up and play'. We like the fresh approach on this done-to-death sport.

Graphics Average but well animated

07

Sound On par but nothing special

07

Gameplay Multiplayer heaven

06

Life span For as long as you have friends...

09



PlayStation 2 VERDICT



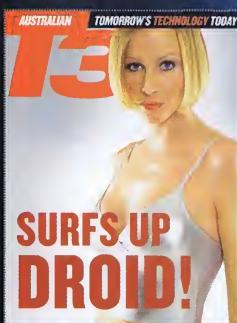
If Mike Tyson played soccer, he'd feature here!

AUSTRALIAN

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REVIEW

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2002 / KNOCKOUT KINGS 2002

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2002

It don't mean a thing if you ain't got that swing

Publisher: EA Sports
 Developer: EA Sports
 Price: \$99.95
 Players: 1-4
 Out: April 5
 Web site: www.ea.com
 60Hz mode: No
 Widescreen: No
 Surround sound: No



Since the dawn of virtual time, golf games have hardly changed. At the forefront of the genre's lack of innovation is the 'swing bar', a power curve that requires nothing more than accurate timing to thwack the ball home. No more.

For its latest incarnation of the Tiger Woods PGA licence, Electronic Arts has introduced an analogue control method in which you draw back your club by pulling down, and strike by pushing forward, in one fluid movement of the stick.

As well as a new swing, Tiger now suffers from nerves when faced with a potentially match-changing shot. The camera narrows and the joypad shudders with every pounding beat of your heart as you bid for glory. Fetishistic replays, fizzing balls and fantasy locales that complement real life courses make for a fresh, arcade-like experience.

The game is founded on the Career mode. You win cash to snap up increasingly pricey stat boosts for accuracy, power, putting and more in order to develop your golfer and prepare for taxing tournaments. PGA 2002 is littered with other rewards for outstanding achievement.

The Scenario mode offers more chances to advance your career. Aside from the usual catch-up and personal best score challenges, a Speed mode requires you to whack the ball around nine holes and sprint after it to boost your cash.

The usual array of two-player options are also

A virtual Tiger guiltily lets one leak out before legging it in a golf cart.



You won't see this whacked-out youth on any real courses.

all present and correct. However, despite bountiful rewards for self-improvement, the Single-player mode will leave action seekers a little cold – this game is more therapeutic than addictive. That's largely because many of the challenges require significant time investment, so you can't pick it up for a quick two minute thrill à la Tony Hawk's 3.

Despite pristine presentation, the commentary is, uncharacteristically for EA, repetitive and rather bland. More worryingly though, the AI is a little skewed, with dodgy opponents missing the wrong shots. They'll land a 95 yard chip out of the bunker within five feet of the pin, then proceed to miss the hole by three yards on the follow-up.

Overall, though, Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002 is the finest realistic golf game out there and the current leader of the pack. □ Lee Hall

Another fantasy course that will test your skills and patience.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2002

Why we'd buy it:
 - Great new swing control and method

07

Why we'd leave it:
 - Cheesy voice-over and dodgy commentary

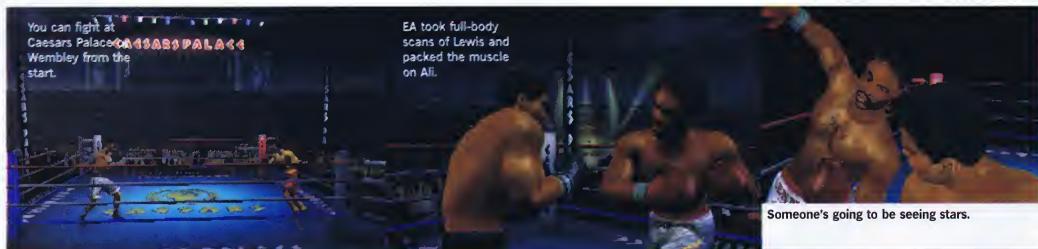
Graphics **B7**

Sound **D5**

Gameplay **D5**

Life span **D7**

PlayStation 2 VERDICT



KNOCKOUT KINGS 2002

Float like a butterfly, sting like Ali.

Publisher: EA Sports
 Developer: EA Sports
 Price: \$99.95
 Players: 1-2
 Out: March 28
 Web site: www.ea.com/
 e-sports
 60Hz mode: No
 Widescreen: No
 Surround sound: No



Knockout Kings 2002 has a decent range of boxers, improved game dynamics and a variety of real-life arenas that'll have you reaching for the gumshield seconds from the bell.

Your arsenal comprises a basic set up of left-jab, straight-right, left-hook and right-hook, with adept use of shoulder buttons transforming these into upper cuts or crafty low blows. While such simplicity ensures you can have a good scrap straight off, mastering the game requires a lot of application – just like the real thing.

Health meters are wisely kept off-screen by default, the quivering on your joypad reflecting your boxer's state of play – leaving your opponent guessing which is as it should be.

A great feature is the ability to customise your own boxer from the boots up to the hair-do. You'll

start out scrapping in some low-lit joint before earning points, improving your stats, and stepping out with the big boys. But it's the Arcade and Two-player modes that provide the quickest fix and allow for pure button-bashing.

However, KK2002 is not without its faults. Choosing Ali as the lead character rather overshadows the other pugilists present, rendering them all a little surplus to requirements. Another downer is the fixed disqualifying limit: you always get chucked out on the fourth instance whenever you flail a backhand or deal a low blow. You should be able to risk more by throwing these, sometimes getting away with it, sometimes not – less predictability please.

Aside from these minor complaints, Knockout Kings 2002 is an enjoyable game, and a big step up from its predecessors. □ Ross Cottingham

Someone's going to be seeing stars.



Butterbean – all the fighters are real.

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2002

Why we'd buy it:
 - A boxing sim without a glass chin

07

Why we'd leave it:
 - Frustrating if one opponent keeps on busting your ass

Graphics **B7**

Sound **D7**

Gameplay **D7**

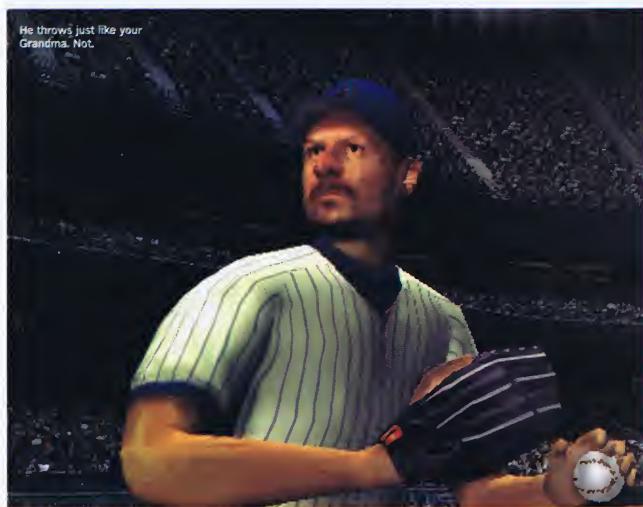
Life span **D7**

PlayStation 2 VERDICT

REVIEW

ALL STAR BASEBALL 2003

He throws just like your
Grandma. Not.



ASB 2003

It's still as hard as hell to connect bat with ball, but that's half the fun!

Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Acclaim
Price: \$99.95
Players: 1-4
Out Now
Web site:
[www.acclaim.com/
asb2003](http://www.acclaim.com/asb2003)
60Hz mode: No
Widescreen: No
Surround sound: No



Patient types will find the inevitable barrage of 'airswings' in *All Star Baseball 2003* intriguingly challenging, but local audiences may also find them too frustrating to enjoy. Acclaim have done a fine job with their 2003 version. While it initially appears as a virtual clone of their last effort, *ASB 2003* has improved many of the finer details, but it takes some deeper delving to uncover them all.

Obviously, Australians don't share the same passion for the sport as our American counterparts, but if you happen to know the 'diamond game', then *ASB 2003* plays a treat.

Both batting and fielding are easy enough to start with, and the concept is fine to pick up. Actually connecting with an incoming pitch is another story but if you put some time in, you'll soon be rewarded and you'll be hitting harder than Barry Bonds himself.

The batting system is not just timing and is actually quite unique. You're presented with a bat 'strike zone' and it enables you to go for home runs, or play tactically around the diamond. Real players are in there, stats included. You'll find this as realistic as you could hope for, with the big hitters more capable of getting your team over the line at innings' close.

Fielding is also a tactical exercise and the bases are reprinted by the 'diamond' already on your Dual Shock. This has been done before, but it remains as the best fielding system by far.

Pitching isn't too complex, and remains quite similar to the one seen in the 2002 version. The entire range of pitches can be employed, and the ability to alter their flights through the air is one of the most exciting of the game proper.

Acclaim have packed in the range of playable modes as well. You can, of course, expect the main crux of the game to lie within the Season

mode. Major League Baseball followers in particular will be well-pleased, as they'll be able to re-live glory seasons or take their woeful favourites to the top of the ladder.

In the unlikely event that you have three mates living close by that share a similar interest in the sport, the exhibition mode will certainly be a treat. Here, all 30 Major League teams are available, as well as two all-star teams and a Legends team. Heroes such as Rod Carew and Willie Stargell appear in this squad.

Franchise mode is even more comprehensive (and complex); and may even prove too daunting for most punters to tackle. It's basically the same as Career mode, but it includes a much heavier emphasis on buying and selling players based on their statistics. If you're keen enough, conquering this mode will prove to be one of the most satisfying that videogaming can offer.

ASB 2003 is best played against a similarly skilled foe who also happens to share a familiarity with the real thing as you do. If you have a friend that fits such a description, we suggest you hit the mound quick smart and really get swinging. □ Richie Young

ALL STAR BASEBALL 2003

Why we'd buy it:

- For the finest Baseball-sim on PS2.
- Because we're chaging a game that will prove to have loads of longevity!

Graphics:

Looks good for what's there.

Sound:

Crowd and music is quite realistic.

Gameplay:

Multiplayer heaven

Life span:

It'll take a while to master batting

Why we'd leave it:

- So we can save our pennies for a decent Cricket-sim!
- We don't like accurate representations of sport!

OPS2 knows that this game won't be a big seller in Australia, but it is a fine effort regardless that remains true to the sport itself. You could do much worse.



PlayStation 2 VERDICT

REVIEW

STAR WARS: JEDI STARFIGHTER



STAR WARS: JEDI STARFIGHTER

A little something to satisfy your *Star Wars* fix until *Episode II* rolls around.

Publisher: Lucasarts
Developer: Lucasarts
Price: \$99.95
Players: 1 - 2
Out: TBC
Web site: www.lucasarts.com/products/jedistarfighter/default.htm
60Hz mode: No
Widescreen: No
Surround sound: Yes

Back story

The first *Star Wars* movie was released in 1977. LucasArts was created as a special arm of George Lucas' film company and are directly responsible for every *Star Wars* videogame release. LucasArts continually have new game projects in development, and they have recently branched out into non-*Star Wars* related games. Their next release for PS2 will be *Bounty Hunter*. This action adventure game will feature the father of one of the series' most interesting characters, Boba Fett.

X When it comes to blockbuster movies and marketing tie-ins, there's no bigger player in the business than the *Star Wars* franchise. For years, the marketing division over at Skywalker Ranch has stuck with one foolproof strategy: simply slap the *Star Wars* name on every piece of merchandise known to mankind and sit back. They did it with the original *Starfighter* and *Episode I*. Now it's a follow-up title just in time for the upcoming release of *Episode II*. If it's *Star Wars*, they'll come.

For the one percent of PS2 owners who aren't *Star Wars* fans, *Jedi Starfighter* has enough going for it to stand alone as a space combat flight sim in its own right. For the rest of us the main attraction of *Jedi Starfighter* will be the opportunity to once again sink into the familiar *Star Wars* universe and get a sneak preview of some of the characters and spacecraft that will feature in the eagerly anticipated *Episode II: Attack of the Clones*.

Initially, there are two playable characters and spacecraft: Nym, the space pirate who returns from the original *Starfighter* for an encore performance, and Adi Gallia, a Jedi Knight. Concerned by ominous signs that the evil Trade Federation is once again growing in power, the Jedi Council dispatches Adi Gallia and Nym to see what the Federation is up to. The storyline, whilst not exactly being the foundation on which epics are built, provides enough support to the gameplay.

There are 14 missions to start with and although they can be completed relatively quickly, there is plenty of incentive to go back and complete the bonus objectives. Doing so will, of course, unlock a stack of rewards and DVD-type extras from additional missions and playable spacecraft to movie concept art. In terms of

maintaining interest, *Jedi Starfighter* does leave it's run a little late and doesn't really get going until half the missions are completed. Before that point, gameplay feels a one-dimensional – just fly around and blow up everything on screen – but get past that point and you won't look back.

Although most people would rather use the Force to crush someone's windpipe, the powers which feature in *Jedi Starfighter* are equally fun to use. They allow you to generate protective force fields, slow down time to increase your rate of fire, fire more powerful blasts, and unleash a smart bomb-type to destroy clusters of enemies.

The game moves along at a steady frame-rate although things do start to go downhill when action on screen reaches frenzy mode, which occurs often. Two player split screen mode exposes this flaw even further. Music is true to *Star Wars* form and cannot be faulted.

Fortunately, *Jedi Starfighter* is not just another piece of merchandise bearing the *Star Wars* tag and little else. The precedent has already been set though and at the end of the day it must be compared with the first *Starfighter*. In doing that, it just doesn't quite measure up as a true sequel. Those who've played the original will no doubt be disappointed than others coming into the series afresh and should be wary that they may be disappointed. □ Derek Lee

STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER

Why we'd buy it:
- It's Star Wars, say no more
- To get sneak peek into *Episode II*

Why we'd leave it:
- Not a significant upgrade over the original
- Repetitive gameplay "supported" by a cheesy storyline

A slickly produced title as always from LucasArts but, as a sequel, fails to deliver on expectations generated by the original.

Graphics

Particular nice explosions & particle effects

07

Sound

Bad dialogue, average effects, brilliant music

07

Gameplay

Majority of the game is too one-dimensional

06

Life span

Plenty of rewards & extras adds to replay value

06

07

PlayStation 2 VERDICT



A few nice touches, but not enough to save *Pirates* from gaming oblivion.

Rule #121: PS2 games must feature over-the-top effects – especially if the game's awful.



PIRATES: THE LEGEND OF BLACK KAT

Enough to turn the most seaworthy sailor into a quivering landlubber.

Publisher: EA
Developer: Westwood
Out: Now
Players: 1-2
Price: \$99.95
Web site: www.westwood.ea.com/games/pirates
60Hz mode: No
Widescreen: No
Surround sound: Yes



There's a school of thought that believes you should never stray from your field of expertise. In short, stick to what you know. Take games developer Square, for instance. Brilliant at RPGs [the *FF* series] but its driving simms suck (*Driving Emotion Type-S*). Westwood, the renowned *Command & Conquer* developers, make the same mistake. *Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat* is evidence enough that Westwood should stick to moving ant-like figures around a map, building bases, and firing guns and other weaponry around battlefields. It should leave the 3D platformer genre to those who know what they're doing.

To be fair, *Pirates* isn't a complete disaster, but it's far from a "must own" piece of software. Black Kat [or Katarina de Leon to her friends] is the female sword wielder of the title who, after being told of her mother's pirating ways by her father on his deathbed, hoists the Jolly Roger and begins buckling her swash with the best of them.

Each level has a series of tasks to perform (find an iron key, locate a map, destroy an enemy stronghold, and all that) before you set sail on the main world map and do it all again somewhere else. In every other respect, though, this is a below-average platformer in both looks and playability.

The game is split between 3D island exploration and sea battles – plus a separate sea-battling mini-game that's accessible from the main menu. But the high seas are the only areas where any enjoyment is to be found, and even there it's in short supply.

The original game setting can't hide the fact that *Pirates* is far more tedious than it needs to be. There are painfully long episodes when you're slowly trudging over a deserted beach with nothing to do, despite the odd appearance of an icy level or a seemingly lost monkey. Waving a cutlass from time to time to dispatch a rival pirate or giant crab does little to impress, and Kat's warnings of sensing buried treasure often fall on deaf or plainly bored ears.

All the usual stereotypes are present and set firmly in place – you can only unlock certain areas after a number of tasks have been completed; chests reveal extra weapons, gold and wine; your standard weapon can be upgraded with various power-ups situated in various locations... But with so many other fine platformers competing for your cash these days, there is no sensible reason to think about adding *Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat* to your library.

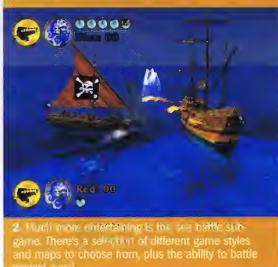
□ Dean Mortlock

SHIP AHoy

The most enjoyable part of *Pirates* has to be the sea battles. They crop up regularly in the game itself, but also appear as a separate sub-game that you can select via the main menu.



1. Destroy the enemy fleet in order to dock safely – there are plenty of bonus pick-ups floating in the sea to enrage your ship.



2. Have more entertainment in the sea battle game. There's a selection of different game styles and maps to choose from, plus the ability to battle against a pal.

PIRATES: THE LEGEND OF BLACK KAT

Why we'd buy it:

- We liked *Treasure Island* when we were younger
- Half-decent sea battles

Why we'd leave it:

- Tries to be original but fails
- Very average graphics
- Painfully dull and tedious gameplay

Possibly worth renting just for the sea battle sections, but even these stages are lost in a shark-infested sea of turbulent boredom.



PlayStation 2 VERDICT



Bored of a level? Jump onto your galley and head for the open seas.

REVIEW

FINAL FANTASY ANTHOLOGY / DRAGON RAGE

FINAL FANTASY ANTHOLOGY

Final Fantasy fans can 'finally' now rest! The 'prequels' are just about to land...

Publisher: Squaresoft
 Developer: Squaresoft
 Price: \$99.95
 Players: 1
 Out: TBC
 Web site: www.squaresoft.com
 60Hz mode: No
 Widescreen: No
 Surround sound: No



Most gamers were introduced to the *Final Fantasy* series with the release of *Final Fantasy VII* on the Playstation several years ago. As the series only experienced moderate popularity outside of Japan up to that point, you may have been wondering what happened to *Final Fantasy I* through *VI*. Well, with this anthology, your questions can at least now be partly answered.

What you get for your money is exact replicas of *Final Fantasy IV* and *V*. Whilst we here are *OPS2* are not ones to place style over substance, the fact remains that the early episodes of *Final Fantasy* have had their heyday, and that the market today is a much more competitive one than it was back in 1991 when these games were first released. We can only assume that if you were a diehard fan of Japanese RPGs, you would have no doubt done your darndest to get your grubby paws on import version of these titles way back when.

Unfortunately, *OPS2* gets the feeling that for those of you who were first introduced to the series with *FF VII*, and are now interested in the series' roots, may be bitterly disappointed with the Anthology.

Yes, the characters are overly cutesy and the dialogue terribly cheesy in parts and over-dramatic on others, but there is an intriguing enough storyline behind both titles to maintain interest. In this department, *FF4* gets a slight nod over *FF5*. In terms of graphics and sound, both titles are straight out ports of the original games in all their



Bald Money Bartz 655

Don't expect a huge workout in the graphics department. This game is ageing fast!

16-bit glory. No attempt has been made to upgrade either title to make use of the power of available in the PS2 or even the PlayStation for that matter. The only slight improvement is in load time. Whilst we're sure that Squaresoft simply didn't want to mess with history, it would have been nice to see what could have been achieved if a few more things had been tweaked. It's done often enough with movies these days, why not with our beloved games?

Fans of retro titles or of the series itself will no doubt be prepared for what awaits them. The ultimate question you have to ask is, if you're not a diehard, whether it's worth it to shell out cash just to satisfy an interest in the roots of a superb series. If you can look past some of the misgivings, you'll appreciate what's on offer. □ Derek Lee

| | |
|---|---------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fight | FuSoYa 916/19 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> White | Rydia 1505/15 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Black | Cecil 1700/30 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regen | Rosa 1756/21 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Item | Edea 2184/21 |

Many gamers are bound to start reminiscing over the SNES-like graphics on offer.

PSOne™

FINAL FANTASY ANTHOLOGY

Why we'd buy it: To see where the best RPG came from!
Why we'd leave it: Because we want to live in the future!

Graphics Fans of the series
Sound will love to see the beginnings of today's masterpiece.
Gameplay **Life span**



PlayStation 2 VERDICT



Dragons - all the rage these days.



Not as pretty as the one in Shrek...

DRAGON RAGE

You don't want to get in the way of this mighty pissed off dragon. Trust us.

Publisher: 3DO
 Developer: 3DO
 Price: \$79.95
 Players: 1
 Out: TBC
 Web site: www.3do.com/dragorage
 60Hz mode: No
 Widescreen: No
 Surround sound: No



OPS2 has harboured a long-standing wish for some developer to rip out a decent dragon game in the mould of Sega's *Panzer Dragon*. In the world of fantasy, there's no cooler creature than the old dragon. 3DO's *Dragon Rage* takes us part of the way, but not quite, there.

Although there has been some attempt to incorporate an interesting plot in *Dragon Rage*, fantasy fans will turn their noses up at it in disdain. This is a pure action title, with an emphasis on killing. Playing as the dragon, Cael, it's your job to teach the orcs a lesson they won't soon forget.

This is certainly no Spyro clone. Make no mistake, this is all about meting out dragon-justice. There's plenty of laughs to be had as you launch fireballs into groups of orcs. Even better is your direct jaw and talon attack which really gets the

gibs flying. No doubt this game will induce maniacal fits of laughter as you tear into opponents. The objective-based missions mix things up a bit but the action does get repetitive.

The environments are quite large in scope offering you plenty of freedom to explore. However, the landscapes themselves are quite bare and the textures on the dull side. The control system is simple yet effective and flying is intuitive enough to almost feel natural. Cael can pull off a few acrobatic moves and has even more attacks at his disposal. It's easy to jump straight in but later levels require mastery of Cael's more difficult to execute attacks, so there is a nicely rounded learning curve.

If you've had enough of first person shooters, *Dragon Rage* is a perfect way to let off a little steam. Those looking for more meat in their action titles will find the going tough. □ Derek Lee

DRAGON RAGE

Why we'd buy it: Nicely polished title at good value for money
Why we'd leave it: Nice models but sub-standard texturing

Graphics A well-rounded title
Sound that's high on the fun factor. Just doesn't offer depth.



PlayStation 2 VERDICT

JONNY MOSELEY MAD TRIX

Another celebrity-backed, second rate extreme sports game. Care factor... zero.

Publisher: 3DO
Developer: 3DO
Price: \$49.95
Players: 1
Out: 5 TBC
Web site: www.3do.com/madtrix
60Hz mode: No
Widescreen: No
Surround sound: No



If you've never heard of Jonny Moseley, he's the dude who won a gold medal in the freestyle moguls at the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympics. If you have heard of him, or are familiar with freestyle moguls, you'll soon discover that *JMMT* bears almost no resemblance to the actual sport itself. But when have developers ever let the truth get in the way of trying to flag a game?

As you'd expect, the name of the game is making your way down a variety of courses, pulling off tricks for points as you go. The trick system itself is far too simplistic, consisting of standard grinds or rail slides, and a handful of grabs and airs, all of which are executed by pressing a combination of the shoulder buttons. There is so little variety that you can exhaust your entire trick arsenal in one run. Whilst it might be OK to occasionally suspend reality for the sake of a gigantic air or massive combo, some of the tricks you can pull off in *JMMT* simply beggar belief. At times you can find yourself floating down from a cliff, pulling off tricks at your leisure. Please leave any need for skill at the door, folks.

If you thought the trick system was bad, well, that's unfortunately only the thin edge of the wedge. Probably the worst thing about *JMMT* is its courses. They are so poorly designed they look like the amateurish ones you'd whip up at home using a create-a-level editor. Honestly, they are that bad. They look like the developers have just taken a

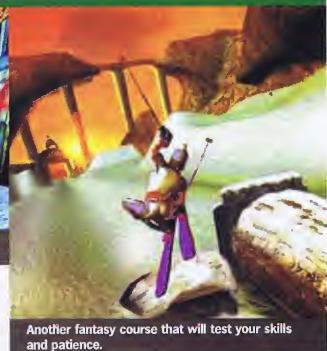


You won't see this whacked-out youth on any real courses.

stack of jumps and rails, thrown them up across a patch of snow, and just left them where they landed. There appears to be no rhyme or reason as to placement; everything seems completely random. This of course means there are no decent lines in any of the courses to speak of.

Whilst you might like the actual artists and songs that make up the background music in *JMMT* in isolation, they simply don't add anything to the overall experience. They distracting at best and annoying at worst. Even worse are the lame sound bites that constantly rear their ugly head as you make your way down each course.

What's the point of creating an extreme sports game that features lame tricks and no sensation of speed? Ask the developers of *JMMT*. □ Derek Lee



Another fantasy course that will test your skills and patience.

JONNY MOSELEY MAD TRIX

Why we'd buy it:
 - You're the president of his Fan Club

Why we'd leave it:
 - Pitiful gameplay with no redeeming qualities

Graphics **05** Budget doesn't necessarily mean crap in this case it does.



PlayStation 2 VERDICT

Who wears pyjamas to play sport? Americans, that's who.

For a second, it looked like a scene from *GTA 3*.

HIGH HEAT MLB 2003

If you can handle a little smoke, take a swing at this incoming slider

Publisher: 3DO
Developer: 3DO
Price: \$99.95
Players: 1-2
Out: Now
Web site: www.3DO.com/highheat/2003/
60Hz mode: No
Widescreen: No
Surround sound: No



Due to some select past efforts, 3DO have started to gain a reputation in gaming circles - for the wrong reasons. Their adventure games in particular have been lackluster, and have attracted scathing reviews for their poor quality. Do not let this affect your judgement here though! Their updated baseball game is indeed, quite entertaining and a high quality release.

For starters, the release of *MLB 2003* coincides with its direct competition (see *ASB 2003* reviewed page 75) but their different approaches will appeal to different gamers.

Gameplay shines over gloss and graphics in this effort. When you first boot this one up, you'll be disappointed at the aesthetic of the whole thing. To put your mind in the 'ball park', it appears to sit somewhere in between PSone and PS2 quality.

Surely they can make grass and stadium look better than this! Character animation and collision detection impresses however.

MLB 2003 is far easier to play than *ASB 2003*. This is an obvious and big plus, but also presents the problem of getting 'too good, too quickly'. Clearly, 3DO do know their baseball and they've made the game appropriately tactical. The pitching system is quite fun and great when you have a mate constantly second guessing what next is coming down the lane.

Plenty of features and modes are packed in, and the five difficulty settings add weeks its life.

This is a strong effort and some gamers are bound to take it far easier than *ASB 2003*. For OPS's money, this is *Just* second-choice but we suggest you demo them both to see what tickles your fancy. □ Richie Young



Batting is the game's greatest challenge.



Real-world players feature in the game.

HIGH HEAT MLB 2003

Why we'd buy it:
 - The satisfaction of a 550 foot monster hit

Why we'd leave it:
 - For the more complex ways of *ASB 2003*

Graphics **05** A copy of this and some drinks would make for great chillout time.



PlayStation 2 VERDICT

media

DVD / INTERNET / PRINT / MUSIC

When you're done playing, here's what you might like to watch, read and listen to...

Text: Richie Young / Ken Spiller / Lee Hart

"I am programmed with 134 facial expressions. This is #84: wistful, with a hint of concern."



A.I. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Warner/\$39.95/Out now

Film: In a future society where robots are an essential component of everyday life, Cybertronics decides to build the ultimate 'mecha': an incredibly humanoid child that has the capacity to love. This prototype, named David (Haley Joel Osment), is placed with a distraught couple whose real son is in a coma. Despite her initial reservations about this otherworldly boy, Monica's (Frances O'Connor) maternal instincts kick in and she accepts David's irreversible, eternal love. But when the couple's real son comes out of the coma and returns home, it sets off a chain of events that sees David abandoned, alone and forced to live out his dreams in the real world.

So begins one of the most magical sci-fi fables ever committed to film. Inspired by the story of *Pinocchio*, David embarks on a journey to find the blue fairy in the hope that she can turn him into a real boy so that he can return home to Monica. Accompanied by an ingenious walking, talking teddy bear and the charismatic sex-mecha Gigolo Joe (Jude Law), David

encounters the terrifying Flesh Fair (where robots are destroyed for public spectacle) and the neon wonders of Rouge City before his quest takes him to the submerged metropolis of Manhattan and a quite startling conclusion.

With an overriding theme reminiscent of *Blade Runner* – what does it mean to be human? Does the ability to love make us real? – and a physical and psychological odyssey that echoes *2001*, Steven Spielberg combines his usual sentimentality with a Kubrickian intelligence to masterful effect. LH

Features: In a package brimming with bonus material the main extra is a fantastic, video diary-style *Making Of*, split into numerous sections that cover every conceivable aspect of production. Visual effects, sound design and cinematography are among the features and we also get insightful interviews with Jude Law and the eerily impressive Haley Joel Osment.

Verdict: Profound, extraordinary and insanely ambitious, *A.I.* is a feast for both eyes and mind. SF doesn't get much better. **9/10**



Magic and spells abound in the film adaptation.

HARRY POTTER

Warner/\$31.95/May 28

Film: All the way up to the wire director Chris Columbus [maker of the truly diabolical films *Home Alone* and *Bicentennial Man*] promised this kiddies fantasy film would be faithful to J.K. Rowling's bestselling book. Well, he was faithful. Too faithful. Whereas Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* beautifully captured the essence of Tolkien's masterpiece without going into all the turgid details, Columbus' tale of sorcery is often pointless.

It starts well with the beleaguered hero Harry and his horrible 'foster' parents. However, the film quickly descends into some sort of Enid Blyton 'ripping yarn' set in a British boarding school - Hogwarts.

The special effects are evidently expensive, but not particularly enjoyable. The acting by the kids is reminiscent of a poor school play. Although, Emma Watson's turn as the studious junior witch Hermione showed considerable potential. The best thing, though, about this adaptation was the measured performance of Alan Rickman as the enigmatic Professor Snape. **KS**

Features: Heaps of cool, interactive goodies that is somewhat of a saviour. E-trading cards, a game, a 'Hogwarts' tour, 'Quidditch' lesson and cast and crew interviews.

Verdict: This much-hyped 'blockbuster' was ultimately tiresome. The 'bad' performances outweigh the 'good'. **3/10**



Looks great for something filmed three decades ago.

DOCTOR WHO

BBC/\$34.95/Out now

Film: This DVD is widely regarded as 'the lost *Dr Who*', and fans of the series have been waiting patiently for this disc to hit store shelves. What's more, being a DVD release, the BBC has done a fine job and image quality is excellent.

The Doctor (played here by Patrick Troughton) is in a bit of a fix as the threat of his enemies in the Cybermen returning for him from their tombs, rises quickly.

The Tomb Of The Cybermen is a particular engaging episode, and it doesn't look as dated as you may initially anticipate.

For many, Patrick Troughton is *the* Dr Who and he plays the role in trademark style. For anyone that used to catch the series on the ABC, it's worthy just for the

sense of nostalgia although the classic genius of the whole shebang is as apparent as it was back then. **RY**

Features: This black and white flick is around thirty-five years old, so you'll be darn impressed with the picture quality on show. The commentary is decent, and again has loads of retro value. Plenty of other features are packed on there as well including interview footage from 1992 (when *TOTC* was first rediscovered); 'before and after' comparisons from the original to the current print as well as other BBC footage, title sequence tests and some rare footage from 'The Evil of the Daleks'. **Verdict:** It won't appeal to everyone, but it's great for young and old. **9/10**



TRAINING DAY

Warner/\$39.95/Out now

Film: Washington picked up an Oscar for his efforts in *Training Day*, and for good reason too. When the movie was first released, our man Denzel actually found some criticism amongst certain circles that claimed that he needed extra charm and confidence to be more convincing in the role. It's now history of course, and if you're yet to see *Training Day* you'll be witness to a committed and impressive performance.

Training Day is ambiguous with the portrayal of some of its characters but therein lies its strength. It's a great good cop, bad cop flick and one that will please fans of the crime genre, and those that find thrillers appealing. Some parts of the script certainly appear

weaker than others but it's generally riveting fare, and will have most movie fans glued to their couches. **RY**

Features: Insight into the movie, with cast and crew is interesting despite its obvious chance at doing some self-promotion. Some deleted scenes are included that give the impression of being 'alternate takes' and are interesting as their possible inclusion would have changed the entire reflection of the movie. Two music clips, theatrical trailer, bios and some DVD-ROM extras add slight value.

Verdict: Definitely worth it just to see the performance that earned Denzel his second Oscar. **7/10**



DRACULA 2000

Buena Vista/\$34.95/Out now

Film: How many spins on the Dracula story can we take?

Wes Craven's take sees a fairly predictable affair, that won't impress ardent fans of vampire cinema all too much for its simplicity and brashness in plot. There's an obvious skew and conscious attempt at appearing cool and edgy, but it's overdone and as transparent as Anna Nicole Smith's 'love'. The cast is generally disappointing. Jonny Lee Miller (*Trainspotting* and *Hackers*) is the standout drone but he's propped up well enough by Gerard Butler (as Count Dracula), Christopher Plummer (the dad from *The Sound of Music* and Justine Waddell (as a vampire hunter's

daughter) for him to get by without too much career damage. *Dracula 2000* moves along well enough, but it's a pretty lame affair as a thorough vampire flick experience. **RY**

Features: A short 'making of', but the auditions from the cast are much more interesting. A couple of deleted scenes have also been thrown in, and if you actually happen to be a fan, you'll be well pleased. Director and screenwriter commentaries are standard fare and it's rounded out with movie sequences, storyboard, artwork and trailer.

Verdict: Definitely a movie of the 90's but loses the 'vampire' charm that most other vampire flicks manage to pull off. **7/10**

"I'm packed into my pants so damned tight, I'm finding it difficult to breathe."

TOP 10 TOM CRUISE DVDS

Risky Business

Warner/\$34.95

Film: Lightweight but enjoyable Eighties comedy, with Tom in his first starring role as a teen who has a wild weekend when his parents go out of town. Quite memorable for Rebecca De Mornay's naughty but nice prostitute and for Cruise's not-in-the-least-bit humiliating dancing-in-underpants scene.

Features: Production notes.

Top Gun

Paramount/\$34.95

Film: The Cruiser hits the big time as loose cannon fighter pilot Maverick in this ludicrous, if stylish Simpson/Bruckheimer production. Infamous for its homoerotic overtones and quotable dialogue – "You can be my wingman anytime" – Top Gun could only have been made in the Eighties.

Features: None.

The Color Of Money

Buena Vista/\$31.95

Film: Martin Scorsese's sequel to Fifties classic *The Hustler* has Paul Newman returning as pool shark "Fast" Eddie Felson managing cocky new potting machine Vincent Lastra [Cruise] before taking on his protégé on the blue belze. A great film and the first indication that Tom was capable of more than just a toothy smile.

Features: None.

Rain Man

MGM/\$34.95

Film: Dustin Hoffman won the Oscar but it's arguably Cruise who delivers the more subtle performance. He plays Charlie

Babbitt – a slick, selfish car salesman who takes his autistic brother Ray [Hoffman] on a trek across the US and becomes a better man along the way.

Features: None.

A Few Good Men

Columbia TriStar/\$19.99

Film: "I want the truth!" You can't handle the truth" idealistic Navy lawyer Cruise goes toe-to-toe with bad old commanding officer Jack Nicholson in this stagey but effective courtroom drama of military cover-ups.

Features: Documentary. Director's commentary.

Interview With The Vampire

Warner/\$35.95

Film: Tom plays the sadistic vampire Lestat to Brad Pitt's miserable bloodsucker Louis as the latter recounts two hundred years of undead life. Ideal Gothic fare for fans of pointy-toothed navel-gazing.

Features: Production notes.

Mission: Impossible I & II

Collector's Set

Paramount/\$39.95

Film: Huge explosions, cunning disguises, cool gadgets and rubbish remixes of that theme tune are the main ingredients in The Cruiser's blockbuster updates of the classic TV series. Brian De Palma directs the twists and turns in the first movie, John Woo gets all slo-mo and symbolic on our asses for the disappointing sequel.

Features: Interviews. Director's commentary. SFX featurettes.

Jerry Maguire

Columbia TriStar/\$34.95

Film: Yuppie sports agent Maguire [Cruise] decides to put an end to his manipulative ways and promptly loses his job and all but one client, Rod Show Me The Money Tidwell [Cuba Gooding Jr]. But with the help of devoted secretary Renee Zellweger and her cute kid, Jerry gets back on his feet and learns that love is more important than money. Trust us, it's much better than it sounds.

Features: None.

Eyes Wide Shut

Warner/\$34.95

Film: When Alice [Nicole Kidman] reveals her secret desire for another man, hubby Willian [The Cruiser] reacts as we all would – he embarks on a journey of self-analysis culminating in a masked orgy. Stanley Kubrick's final film is a spellbinding study of sexual relations in which not a great deal happens, but everything is laden with intriguing subtexts.

Features: Interviews.

Magnolia

Columbia Tri Star/\$34.95

Film: Featuring Tom's finest performance so far – as Incendiary sex guru Frank "Respect The Cock" Mackey – PT Anderson's sprawling tapestry follows a disparate ensemble as they struggle to resolve their lives and heal some deep psychological scars. The result is an ingenious, emotionally devastating journey.

Features: Magnolia diary. Frank Mackey seminar. Music video.

>> DVD REVIEWS



"Mr Robinson, are you trying to induce me?"

MARATHON MAN

Paramount/\$34.95 Out now

Film: "Is it safe?" Well, it certainly isn't for anyone who has a phobia of dentists. John Schlesinger's classic 1970s thriller pits innocent runner Dustin Hoffman against Nazi war criminal Laurence Olivier – who has a specialty in conducting excruciating dental torture. Olivier is trying to determine whether or not it's safe to go and collect the diamonds he has hidden in a safety deposit box, and he becomes convinced that Hoffman [brother of murdered government agent Roy Scheider] has the answer.

A gritty, uncompromising movie with excellent performances [particularly from the chilling Olivier]. Just make sure you floss thoroughly afterwards. **LH**

Features: Two interview-based featurettes including the wonderfully-titled *The Magic Of Hollywood... Is the Magic Of People* made during production and boasting rare behind-the-scenes footage. There's also rehearsal footage of Hoffman and Scheider improvising.

Verdict: An edge-of-the-seat, Seventies thriller. Not for the faint-hearted. **8/10**



MONTY PYTHON AND THE HOLY GRAIL

Columbia TriStar/\$34.95 Out now

Film: Although *Life Of Brian* is the Python's most consistently funny film, this muddy, bloody satire on Britain's obsession with its mythical past is just as essential. Graham Chapman takes on the role of King Arthur, leading his round table of Knights on their hopeless quest with typical camp pomposity. As usual, this central premise is merely an excuse for loads of daft sketches with the knights who say "mif" and the killer rabbit proving just about the silliest of the bunch. Then, of course, there's the classic sword fight between Arthur and the Black Knight,

which ends with the latter limbless but still unwilling to concede defeat ("I'll bite your legs off!"). But, like *Life Of Brian*, there are serious points in here too – the contrast between the aristocracy and the common people has never been made clearer in any serious historical drama. No, really. **LH**

Features: Absolutely loads of great stuff including two excellent commentaries by the team and a unique *Making Of* with Terry Gilliam and Michael Palin visiting various locations used in the film.

Verdict: A work of surreal genius. **9/10**



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PlayStation 2
THE THIRD PLACE
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Postal

This month, DOA3, feeling cheated and Final Fantasy X, plus 'give me free stuff. Again.'

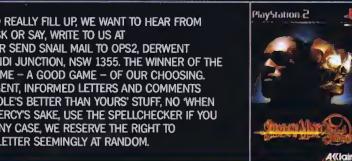
AS WE WAIT FOR OUR POST BAGS TO REALLY FILL UP WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU. IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO ASK OR SAY, WRITE TO US AT OPS2, PERTH, P.O. BOX 1037, BONDI JUNCTION, NSW 1355. THE WINNER OF THE STAR LETTER EACH ISSUE GETS A GAME – A GOOD GAME – OF OUR CHOOSING. JUST REMEMBER: WE WANT INTELLIGENT, INFORMED LETTERS AND COMMENTS PLEASE. NO FLAMING, NO 'MY CONSOLE'S BETTER THAN YOURS STUFF. NO 'WHEN IS GAME XXX OUT?' ETC. AND FOR MERCY'S SAKE, USE THE SPELLCHECKER IF YOU SEND YOUR LETTER BY EMAIL – IN ANY CASE, WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO TRUNCATE, HACK AND SLASH YOUR LETTER SEEMINGLY AT RANDOM.

STAR LETTER

I've just started buying your mag and from what I've read it's everything a gamer could possibly ask for: fantastic! In other words. Anyway, now to the point: I've recently bought six games for my PS2. They include *The Bouncer*, *Dead or Alive 2*, *Operation Winback*, *SSX Tricky*, *Devil May Cry* and *Silent Hill 2*. They are all marvellous but the best two of the bunch are *SSX Tricky* and *DOA2*. Since I was so in love with *DOA2*, there is a question I seriously need answered. Is there going to be a *Dead or Alive 3* on the PS2?

Callan W. Bunbury, W.A.

Thanks for your letter, Callon. We wonder about your choice of games there – *The Bouncer*? Still, in answer to your question, I'm afraid not, no. *Dead or Alive 3* was an Xbox exclusive, so no game of that name will ever grace the PlayStation 2, we're sorry to say. That doesn't, however, preclude Tecmo from releasing another *Dead or Alive* game for your console – it would just have a different title and, knowing Tecmo, slightly altered features in terms of character costumes or levels. We can but hope. And while you're waiting, have a game (*Street Fighter IV*) on us.



for you and many others and the answer is May 31. That's only about a month after this issue goes on sale, so not long now. Chin up!

STOP THE CLOCK

Am I the only person who feels cheated at the time it takes to finish games? For example, *Silent Hill 2* took me 12 hours to complete. Okay, it was a good game but \$100 is a lot of money for such short-lived gaming. I completed *Jak And Daxter* within four days of buying it and finished *Devil May Cry* in under six hours – crazy! Again, these are great games, but what happened to the games of a few years ago that had a good few weeks' life in them, and at a cheaper price too? I don't suppose I'm the only one who can't find money for more than one game a month. I know it's unreasonable to expect every title to boast the six-week gameplay of *Final Fantasy VII*, but four days surely isn't good enough.

Now comes the much-awaited *Metal Gear Solid 2*. I have read that it could be played through in a weekend. Are we moving into an era of gaming where we sacrifice longevity for looks, cut-scenes and set-pieces? Next I'll be told the 'ten' in *Final Fantasy X* refers to the number of minutes it takes to finish it!

My suggestion to PS2 owners is to use auction sites to sell finished games. I often get 70 per cent of their original value back. You can play the latest games, finish them and sell them on at minimal loss. At least that way you can feel a little less cheated by the PS2 'mini games' with which we seem to be constantly showered.

Jason Mitchell, via email

ON THE BUSES

Has anyone else noticed how much buses have in common with good PS2 games? You wait for ages for one to turn up and then loads come along at once! Okay, admittedly PS2 games are quite a lot smaller than buses. And you can't get loads of people into a PS2 game and take them shopping. And they don't have miserable sweaty drivers. And a bus fare doesn't usually cost \$100. And, when they do turn up, buses aren't nearly as entertaining. And you can't get several dozen buses into a cupboard.

On the other hand, maybe PS2 games aren't really that much like buses after all... um... I forgot what my point was now... Oh yeah, I can't afford to catch all the 'buses' that are turning up at the moment, so can I have some free stuff?



No? Worth a shot.

Nathan Green, via email

Um, no – and no, we don't carry change for a twenty either...

WHAT THE!!

I'm wondering when *Final Fantasy X* will be released in Australia? I read in another game magazine that *FFX* was coming out in April. I also asked a guy at a game store: he said "June" and I read in *PSM2* that it was coming out in July. Please help! **Sean Donaghey, NSW**

Well, Sean, it seems you and about a million others are wondering this. Serves you right for reading other mags. Seriously, though, we spoke to a SCE representative to try and clear this all up

You're not the only person, Jason – we've had several letters like this over the last year or so. The question remains, however: What are you really looking for from a game? You refer to mythical games of yore that seemed to last forever, but these games never really existed. If you went back and booted up your old SNES or MegaDrive now, you'd find games that do indeed take lengthy perseverance to complete, but rely heavily on repetition to give the artificial impression of longevity. That's why games offering a much greater variety of gameplay experience, not to mention visual impact and story development, have taken over. Maximo for example is, a decidedly old-skool

title that caused a divide in the office. It's the PS2 game that's possibly taken us longest to finish, but some of us had to give up, worn down by replaying of tricky platform stages. In defence of your point, however, there are indeed many games that are guilty of cynically replacing gameplay action with cut-scenes.

BACK TO THE DARK AGES

This topic came into my mind while playing *Tekken Tag* with my (female) friend the other day. What astonished me was that she was appalling – even my three-year-old brother was noticeably better than her. So is this biological or what?

I was hoping you would know the true answer so that I can convince girls out there that they are retarded when it comes to playing videogames... and that I am the king of games.

James, via email

Get sharpening those pencils, girls.

GRAPHICAL QUESTION

When PlayStation 2 came onto the market it was clearly the best gaming console as far as graphics were concerned (as it's only real competition was the Dreamcast and that didn't hang around in Australia for too long).

Now, with the introduction of the Microsoft Xbox and the impending arrival of the Nintendo GameCube, I was wondering, firstly, what are the differences in the graphic capabilities of these consoles? And secondly, will Sony release a new console to try and better both the Microsoft Xbox and the Nintendo GameCube?

Steve Funnel, NSW

We're all diehard gamers here at OPS2, Steve, and competition hopefully means more choice and less developer complicity, so we're basically delighted that our machine isn't the only one on the market. When it comes down to it, though, it's all about the gaming experience, not just the graphics. History suggests that it's not the most powerful machine that wins the battle, but the one with the best combination of game play, software library and those elusive 'killer apps'. Straight hardware comparisons, therefore, aren't very helpful in determining the competitiveness of a console. And PS3? It'll be a few years yet.

Exclusive!

HARRY POTTER
and the PHILOSOPHER'S STONE



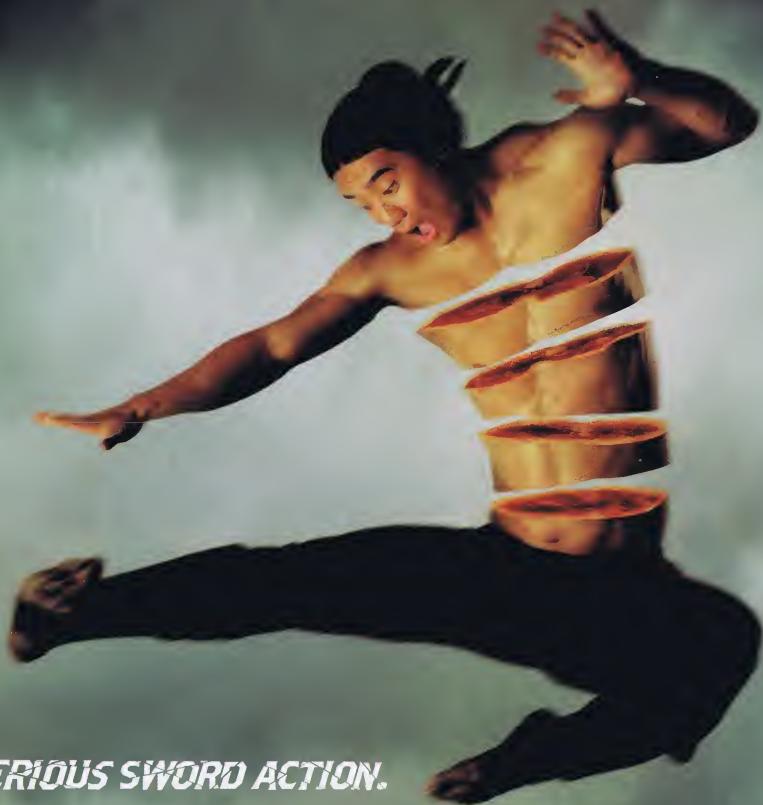
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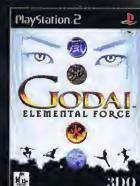
WHAT DVD

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HARD CORE

Tips, tactics, tricks, cheats. Want to rip your new games to shreds? Welcome to the section that's strictly for the HardCore...



This month we're featuring a walkthrough for a game from those near-deities at Sega: Headhunter. It may not be the most innovative game of its type on the market but there's plenty to like in the bounty hunter concept and there are enough tricky sections to merit a helping hand. Goodness knows there are loads of instances where it really isn't that obvious what needs to be done next to progress - getting that keycard off Angela in the mansion right at the start is a good example.

Elsewhere, you'll find tips for *Silent Hill*, *Resident Evil*, *Code Veronica X*, *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty* and that controversial but indisputably brilliant gangster-land masterpiece, *Grand Theft Auto 3*, to name a few.

We hope you like the walkthrough and would like to hear what other games you'd most like to see get the treatment, so write in and tell us. Have fun.

Max Everingham
HardCore Editor

WRITE IN!

Stuck? Frustrated? About to slam your Dual Shock 2 through the TV screen? Then write to Hardcore. We'll do our best to unearth codes, secrets, walkthroughs or advice for just about any game you want. So, if you need a hand, just pick up that pen or keyboard and write to me, Max Everingham c/o Hardcore, Official PlayStation 2 Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction NSW 2022. Galactic laserpost to: OPS2@derwenhoward.com.au

HEADHUNTER - WALKTHROUGH

Sega's Metal Gear Solid wannabe presents more than its fair share of perplexing puzzles within its perilous parameters, all of which are laid bare in our complete solution.

ESCAPE THE COMPLEX

Waking up in a strange environment, your first goal is to escape the laboratory before you die of noxious fume poisoning. As you proceed down the gas-filled corridor, guards will pop up and start taking pot shots at you. Use your Stimulator Automatic weapon and don't worry about using the bullets sparingly because you have an infinite supply. There are five guards to kill and once they have all been vanquished, simply walk to the far end of the corridor and open the door to complete the stage.

THE STERN MANSION

After the cut-scenes, you'll emerge in the Stern mansion. Angela will be behind the bar but you can't interact with her until you have searched the room for items to jog your memory. There are two documents on the bar, a portrait on the wall behind you, a certificate above the fireplace and a couple of books on the table. Once you've examined them all, Angela will hand you a KEYCARD, so use this to take the elevator down to the garage - but before you do, be sure to take the ADRENALINE from the gym opposite the elevator. After another cutscene, you'll emerge on Angela's motorbike. Use this to ride off the garage, turn right and head towards the North District of town.

THE NORTH DISTRICT (1)

OBJECTIVES

- Earn 250 Skill Points
- Go to the LEILA office
- Complete License test 'C'

When you first emerge in the North District, check your map and you'll see the location of the LEILA offices. However, before you go there you must earn 250 Skill Points. The best way to obtain them is to ride at top speed along the district's many long straightaways without hitting anything. Once you hit top speed, your Skill Points meter will appear in the bottom corner of the screen and will begin counting up until you either slow down or hit another vehicle or wall. When you manage to build up to 250, head towards the LEILA offices, drive into the car park behind the main building and then

dismount the bike by pressing the **X** button in the designated area. Now enter the building and prepare to take your 'C' license (see VR Missions). When you have obtained your license, be sure to take your new weapons from the 'C' locker before you leave the building.

THE NORTH DISTRICT (2)

OBJECTIVES

- Track down Greywolf and question him about Fulci's whereabouts
- Greywolf should be at either the abandoned Amico factory or the closed-down gas station in the North District
- Locate the informers and try to get information on Greywolf from them
- After leaving the LEILA offices, get back on your bike and check your map. Two new locations will now be flashing - the Wolfpack HQ and the Wolfpack Gas Station. Head towards the Gas Station, whilst all the time riding those long straightaways to help build up your Skill Points to 500. Be very careful though, hit something and those points will drop dramatically.

GAS STATION

When you arrive at the Gas Station, Angela will pinpoint the locations of the two informers on your map.

First of all, check behind the crate on your right to obtain a RESONATOR GRENADE then head left and down down the side alley after the pumps - there will be a crate with some ADRENALINE at the entrance to the alley. As you proceed down the alley (take note of the carwash control box), take out the first Wolfpack henchman and then go around the back to where the two henchmen are indulging in a spot of target practice. Kill them both and then pick up the CAR BATTERY and the two RESONATOR GRENADES and then observe the Informer in the burning car [whom you can't get to yet].

Now go back around and enter the Gas Station, take the RESONATOR GRENADE and then go through the open door at the back of the building. Kill the mechanic and take the HEALTHPACK. Now operate the control

panel for the car-lift. As the car is being lowered, the system will short circuit - so you'll have to restore power. Walk around to the locker and take the RESONATOR GRENADE on the way. You'll need a key for the locker, so use the CAR BATTERY in the control panel for the overhead crane and when the engine has been lifted out of the pit, go down the steps and take the CARWASH TOKEN. Now leave the building and get ready to fight three more henchmen who have just arrived on the scene. Go to the car wash control panel and use the token to open up a new area. Walk into the car wash and kill the henchman lying in wait. Take the RESONATOR GRENADE (If you have room) and then go through the door. In this next room you'll find the fuse box and the LOCKER KEY. Take this key back to the locker in the garage and open it to get the ELECTRIC CORD. Take this cord back to the fuse box and then replace it to lower the car in the garage. Take the FIRE EXTINGUISHER from the car and then go back outside and round the back to where the burning car is situated. Use the extinguisher on the car. Take the CROWBAR from the dead Informer and then use this on the door around the other side of the Gas Station (the one that is boarded up). You now emerge in the toilets. Walk down to the end, up to the corpse of the other Informer and use the AMICO KEYCARD. A cut-scene will now play to end the level.

WOLFPACK HQ (1st floor)

When you leave the Gas Station, towards the Wolfpack HQ that's pinpointed on the map. Once you arrive, kill the lone guard and use the keycard on the door at the back (not the one up the steps). Once inside, scout around for the Wolfpack henchmen and pick them off one by one using your Scorpion NEURON weapon. If they become alerted and attack, draw out your Stimulator Automatic to take them out quickly. Pick up the PROXIMITY MINE, WALKIE TALKIE and PADLOCK KEY in this area and then go back outside. Use the key on the padlocked box and flick the switch inside to restore power to the elevator. Now go back into the building via the first door and use the elevator to go to the third floor.

WOLFPACK HQ (3rd floor)

Search around for a PROXIMITY MINE in the toilets and a RESONATOR GRENADE next to the service elevator. As you approach the double doors, you'll overhear a meeting taking place behind them. Listen to what Is said, then enter the room across the hall. Take the TRUTH SERUM from the table and examine the DOCUMENT. When you leave the room, an enemy will emerge from behind the locked door and open fire. Kill him and go through the door he emerged from. There is a RESONATOR GRENADE in the small

room so take that and then go through the next door.

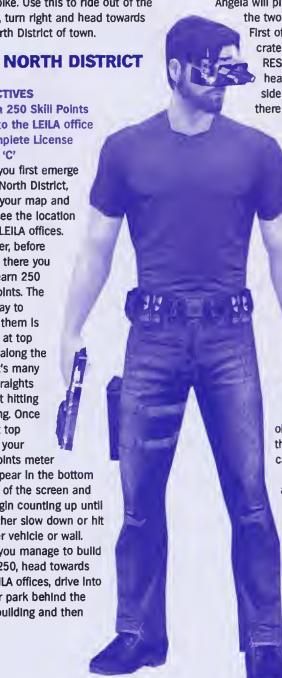
There will be an enemy nearby with his back to you - snap his neck and then get ready to engage in gunfire with two other bad guys who soon come running. Go through the door on the left and then through another door to emerge in a small room with a large crate that is obscuring a poster on the wall. Hold down the **X** button next to the crate and pull it away from the wall then examine the poster "Wolfpack rules since 1993."

Go back out to the mine corridor and then proceed down to the small room on the left where you can find some ADRENALINE. Leave the room and go back down the other corridor and through the first door. Take the PROXIMITY MINE and then use the **X** button to push and pull the crate so that it's moved to the end of the shelf holding the object. Once the crate is in position, you automatically climb on top, enabling you to reach the LOCKER KEY. Now go through the next door in the corridor and search around for the HEALTHPACK and a RESONATOR GRENADE before using the key to open the locker. Take the BROKEN EMBLEM. When you leave the room, Greywolf contacts you on the WALKIE TALKIE - you can opt to answer the call if you wish. Either way, Greywolf will be suspicious and send a couple of the guys down. Go through the door at the far end of the corridor (to the left of the door you entered this area by) and you emerge in the original corridor. Use the **□** button to hide behind the crates and then use a grenade to take out the two guards - be careful here because one is brandishing a shotgun. When they have been killed, go to the entrance to the meeting room and another cut-scene will play.

Remembering the poster, enter the four-digit code of '1993' on the keypad to open the door and then get ready for your first boss battle.

DEFEATING BRUCE

As soon as Greywolf is done with the chit-chat, immediately crouch down and start firing away at Bruce. You can take some cover behind the desk, or the shelves in the left-hand corner if you wish. After a round of bullets hell fall down for a couple of seconds before standing up for a second assault. Empty your next round into him and he'll be dropped permanently, if you catch Bruce with a shot whilst he is drawing a grenade, he may drop it and blow himself up, which is extremely helpful of him. Examine the locker in the corner to receive the WOLFPACK EMBLEM and a DOCUMENT. Now plant a mine near the door and press the red button on the desk. Now simply camp out and wait for the enemy to come to you. When he is dead, go back to the lift and take it to the second floor, stopping to pick up any supplies you may have missed on this floor.



HEADHUNTER - WALKTHROUGH

WOLFPACK HQ (2nd floor)

When you finally emerge on the second floor, take the HEALTHPACK and insert the WOLFPACK EMBLEM into the punching machine and input the following pattern:

- Row #1: 1, 4
- Row #2: 1, 2, 3, 4
- Row #3: 2, 3
- Row #4: 1, 4

With your new emblem, go back to the meeting room on the third floor and use it on the right-hand door. You are now able to access the roof where Greywolf is lurking. Lock and load, and prepare for the second boss battle.

DEFEATING GREYWOLF

This hairy hell's angel brandishes a bazooka which will hurt you quite severely if you get caught in its blast radius. There is a HEALTHPACK to the right when you start the stage, so be sure to grab that if you don't already have one. The best tactic to use when fighting Greywolf is to observe the shape of the map and then stay behind the block closest to the door. Watch Greywolf's movements on the map and then, as he turns a corner, get ahead of him and unleash a few shots. He will turn around and take aim so be quick on the retreat and run for cover before his bazooka shell explodes. When he is hit, he will run back down to the end block – enabling you to get a few free shots in the process. Repeat this process until he is defeated. Of course, you could be clever and scatter mines in his path, in which case two of these and a couple of shots will do the job. Now watch the cut-scene and listen to Greywolf squealing like a pig.

After the cut-scene, go into the armory room that's through the second door on the roof to get a RESONATOR GRENADE and a HEALTHPACK. When you're done, exit via the door you came in through. You must now upgrade to a 'B' license so speed back to the LEILA offices to embark on some more VR missions. If you haven't yet gained the 500 Skill Points needed to take the licence, be sure to acquire them on your way back to the LEILA building.

When you have passed the 'B' licence tests, walk over to the 'B' locker and take the REGULATOR SHOTGUN, the STIMULATOR AUTOMATIC- and the ACTION BELT before leaving. Head back to Stern Mansion, watch the cut-scene then head through the checkpoint that leads to the South District.

THE SOUTH DISTRICT

OBJECTIVES

- Enter the mall through the sewers
- Rescue Angela from the terrorists in the mall

Use the quiet South District roads to boost your Skill Points to 800 (the target needed for your 'A' licence) then head to the mall. In the sewers, walk along the narrow path and pick up the PROXIMITY MINE. After the cut-scene, kill the guards around the corner then go up the ladder near the second guard that leads into the Mall B2 parking lot.

In parking lot, go left and pick up the PROXIMITY MINE next to the bin to the side of the elevator. Then creep up behind the nearby guard and break his neck. Do the same with the next two to avoid taking any damage (shooting is

quicker but will alert other guards). When all the guards have been killed take the RESONATOR GRENADE that's near one of the cars then take the ramp at the end of the parking lot to the next level.

B-1

The level should be deserted for now, so proceed through the parking lot and take the SHOTGUN SHELLS from beside the pillar. As you go around the corner you'll set off the alarm in one of the cars, alerting the two nearby guards. Take them out then walk to the far end of the parking lot. There is an explosive device on the wall – take note. Now go through the door leading to the stairs.

Go through the next door on your right and then patrol the area, taking out each of the three guards with a stealthy neck snap. Now search the offices for NEUROSTUNNER BULLETS, a RESONATOR GRENADE and a PROXIMITY MINE; the toilet for a HEALTHPACK, the broom cupboard for some SHOTGUN SHELLS and a RESONATOR GRENADE. Finally, move the crate in the storeroom to expose a short cut that leads back down to the basement. Now go back out the way you came in and head upstairs.

Go through the first door you find and search for some ADRENALINE and SHOTGUN SHELLS before opening the air vent nearby. Hop inside the duct, turn left and walk to the far end of the passage, where a cut-scene will play.

NEW OBJECTIVE!

- Find out more about the Syndicate's secret plan, 'Project Millennium'

Go back out of the air vent, take a right and go through the first door on the left (previously locked). There's a guard inside – take him out with your shotgun before examining the panel on the left.

NEW OBJECTIVE!

- Replace the circuit card in the circuit board in the sewers to get the mall security system back online

Take the SECURITY CONTROL CARD and the DOCUMENT from the desk then head back down to the sewers via the ladder that was obscured by the crate earlier on. There are guards to kill along the way, some of which have machine guns! Kill the guards in the sewers then use the Control Card on the security control panel and head back upstairs to the main staircase. Go up the first flight and through the first door you come to. A cut-scene now plays. When play resumes, immediately run left and hide behind the crate. When the guard walks down your corridor, turns his back and walks back up, run behind him and snap his neck. Do the same to the next guard then go into the office (where you got the security card) and push the button on the panel. Now go through the door marked 'Staff Only' to enter the main shopping area.

Take out the three guards using your stealth attack and search the area for goodies. There are NEUROSTUNNER BULLETS and a HEALTHPACK in the upper tier (walk up the escalator) and a RESONATOR GRENADE in front of you when you enter the area. There's also another HEALTHPACK in the record shop to the left (there's a guard in here!) Now

head to the far-right area of the mall and drag the trolley out of the elevator (next to the 'Feel It' shop) then take the elevator up to the second floor.

PALMERA MALL F2

Sneak up behind the first guard and snap his neck, then shoot the second guard and go into the kitchen area at the end (the door along the way takes you back out onto the stairs.) Take the RESONATOR GRENADE and PROXIMITY MINE. Go to the end of the corridor and inspect the lift. A cut-scene now rolls and you see Angela stuck in the lift. Use the fire hose to pull Angela to safety. The cut-scene shows the detonation of the explosives in the mall – many of the old areas are now accessible.

NEW OBJECTIVES!

- Stop 'Project Millennium'
- Follow Ramirez through the sewers to the Millennium Bank
- Hook Angela into the bank's mainframe

Go through the door and follow the corridor around to the brown double doors back out into the main shopping area. The ACN has now stormed the building so the place is crawling with agents. Your weapon is automatically switched to the Neurostunner so as not to cause any fatalities. Avoiding the laser beams and any patrolling agents, make your way through the door on the lower level of the shopping area and head towards the staircase. Take the stairs down to the basement. Go through the basement, kill the terrorist and head back down to the sewers via the ladder that was under the crate. Follow the passages out of the sewers – there'll be some guards to take out along the way – then go up the ladder at the end to the Millennium Bank.

MILLENNIUM BANK

Take the HEALTH PACK and toss a grenade into the room ahead, then take out the terrorist inside and the other two outside. Use the computer and observe the surveillance camera, then push the button to open the security doors. Go back to the main foyer where the other two terrorists were and take the SHOTGUN SHELLS and PROXIMITY MINE. Now head back to the back room and examine the electronic lock in front of the glass doors. When you open the door, you'll have to fight Ramirez.

DEFEATING RAMIREZ

This guy attacks by launching his pet spider at you, of which he'll deploy three at a time. When they spot you, they lunge into a full-bodied attack which will drain your health in seconds – fire two shots at each to make them explode. The idea is to use these spiders to destroy the safety door. That Ramirez is standing behind, so destroy two of the three spiders that make up a wave and then shoot the third spider once. In order to stun it. Walk up to it and press **(X)** to gain control of the spider.

The view then switches to a first-person spider perspective, so use the analogue stick to change the direction of the spider, aim it at the security door and press **(X)** to make the spider dash towards it. As you near the door, press **(X)** again to make the spider jump, then explode. The best position to be in is up against the security door

facing away from it. The spiders always start in the same position – one straight ahead opposite the door, one diagonally ahead and to the left [it'll attack from the desks] and the third will attack from the screens to the left. Once you've hit the door with five spiders, a cut-scene rolls and Ramirez is defeated.

As Ramirez is immune to all forms of torture, use the TRUTH SERUM on him and make him squeal like a baby. You now have to log-in to the main computer terminal – remember the coloured patterns and repeat them. Just write down each sequence within the time limit then enter it when prompted using the symbol buttons that correspond with the colour. You have now completed the level.

However, you now have to acquire 800 Skill Points if you didn't manage it in the level so head back to the LEILA building to take your A-Licence (see VR Missions!) When you have completed all 'A' licence tasks, take the SUB MACHINE GUN and CODE BREAKER from the 'A' locker and leave the building. Your next goal is to reach 1300 Skill Points and head towards the Wolfpack HQ in the North District. Use the long straight in this zone to reach your Skill Point target, then go to the HQ pinned onto the map.

WOLFPACK HQ (again)

Take the NEUROSTUNNER BULLETS and use your weapon to knock out the ACN agent (you can use stealth kills!). Now use your CODE BREAKER on the electronic lock and lower the ladder to the fourth floor. There are two guards to kill here, so sneak up on them and snap their necks. Go into the ammo room and take the RESONATOR GRENADE and NEUROSTUNNER BULLETS then go through the door into the staircase.

Go down the stairs into the filling room and exit through the door. There are three guards patrolling this next area and killing the one straight ahead awards you with NEUROSTUNNER BULLETS. It's probably best you avoid them altogether and duck into the elevator shaft. Once inside, climb down through the grate to emerge in a new section of the second floor. Head right out of the elevator then drag the crate into the room and align it with the control box. Now climb up and hit the switch. Head back to the elevator and go through the door right next to it.

Go through the next door and hit the switch to lower the ladder, avoiding the two ACN agents. Go down the ladder then run up the stairs to the left. Now enter the elevator and head to the third floor. Take out the agents surrounding the elevator entrance and go through the double doors into the meeting room. Use the CODE BREAKER on the magnetic log to the filling room. Then go in and take the BOMB MAP, LOCKPICK and DOCUMENT from the table. You're now automatically taken back to the North District streets.

BOMB DIFFUSION

Time is ticking! Using your bike, speed to the flashing dots indicated on the map and you'll automatically enter the sewers. Negotiate the tunnels, kill the guards (if need be) and look for a silver suitcase. You must open it and enter three codes to disarm the bomb. You

simply have to press the sequence of buttons that it tells you to. Once each bomb is disarmed, you're awarded more time with which to get to the next. Here are some clues as to where each suitcase bombs are situated:

Suitcase #1: Take the right fork at the end of the sewer passage.

Suitcase #2: Stay on the right path through the sewer passage.

Suitcase #3: Go left, then left again and follow the sewer passage around.

Suitcase #4: Kill the first guard then shoot the fuel to wipe out the second.

Suitcase #5: Keep to the outside left sewer passage.

Suitcase #6: Shoot the first guard, then shoot the fuel to wipe out the second. When the sixth bomb at the LEILA building has been disarmed, a lengthy cut-scene will roll. You emerge in the Aquadom and must face the next boss – the mighty Gladiator.

DEFENDING GLADIATOR

All you've got to do here is wait until the Gladiator is close behind then walk onto the red and green pressure pads. The idea is to charge them up, then walk off just as Gladiator is walking onto them. If timed right, an electrical charge will blast Gladiator and stun him for a few seconds (he takes damage even if the charge is omitted before he gets onto the pad). You can only stand on the red pads for a few seconds (until the word 'Danger' is displayed) but you can stand on the green pad as long as you like to lure Gladiator onto it.

The guards step into the area to shoot you as you fend off Gladiator, so dash away from the boss and shooting them before continuing. Keep repeating this process until Gladiator is defeated and you'll be crowned the new champion!

THE DOCKS

OBJECTIVES

- Find Jack
- Investigate the 'special cargo' in warehouse 12. Jack may be there

You now have to ride the angle who must locate Jack's whereabouts. Turn around and pick up the PROXIMITY MINE in the corner (a glitch in the programming means it's concealed under the concrete, but look for the red icon), then kill the two guards and hit the gate switch in order to access the next area.

Kill the guard straight ahead with a stealth kill and then do the same on the next. Pick up the RESONATOR GRENADE at the end of the area populated by the second guard and go and take out the guard patrolling the bridge. Don't go over the bridge just yet, instead go down to the end and pick up the RESONATOR GRENADE on one side of the wall and the ADRENALINE on the other side. Now go over the bridge and open the gate to the next area. There are three heavily-armed guards here, so observe their patrol patterns and take each one out with a stealth kill.

Now walk around the area and look for warehouse 12 – it's in the top-left corner of the map and is identifiable by the large number painted on the front. Go inside and take out the two guards using your office where the guards were. Take the

LOADING KEYCARD from the desk then go and pick up the HEALTH PACK at the other end of the warehouse and leave. Walk behind the warehouse then go through the gate into the next area. There are two more guards to kill so observe their patterns, creep up and snap their necks. Inspect the gate and you'll automatically use the LOADING KEYCARD. Now simply walk forwards to complete the stage.

QUEEN OF HEARTS

OBJECTIVES

- Find where Jack is being held on the ship

First, take out the guards patrolling the deck of the ship, being careful not to stray into the searchlights. Search the area for a RESONATOR GRENADE and then go to the back of the ship where you'll find a door – go through it.

Kill the guard that walks around the corner then go through the next door to enter a stairwell. Go up the steps to the second floor of the ship and go through the door. Turn left and go into the open door to find a RESONATOR GRENADE and a DOCUMENT. While you're here, inspect the Alpha, Beta and Gamma machine then leave the small room and go and kill the guard around the corner. Go through the first door into the captain's cabin and take the BETA CHEMICAL, DICTAPHONE and DOCUMENT from the desk. Then take the HEALTH PACK from the adjoining room and leave the cabin. There is nothing of interest in the toilets around the corner, so go back to the stairwell and proceed up to the third floor.

Once on the third floor, turn around and go into the small room to find a RESONATOR GRENADE, then go down the other passage, pushing up against the walls to avoid the spotlight. If you are caught in its glare, guards will come calling, so beware. Take the RESONATOR GRENADE and then head down the thin passage which leads to some cabins. Go into the first cabin and take the ADRENALINE, ALPHA CHEMICAL and the DOCUMENT, then come out and go around the corner to pick up a PROXIMITY MINE. Go back and then go down the flight of stairs on the left.

When you emerge in a new section of the second floor, go left and you can open the door next to the toilets near the captain's cabin for a short cut. Go right and take out the two enemies guarding the door then go inside to meet up with Jack. After a cut-scene, go and open the other door at the end of the passage (which takes you back near the stairwell on the second floor) then go through the door on the right into the stairwell and up two flights of steps to the fourth floor.

Take the RESONATOR GRENADE from the closet and then go through the

other door to trigger a short cut-scene. When the guards have finished talking, they continue work on the computers, allowing you to sneak up behind and snap their necks. Take the DOCUMENT on the table then choose to push the button, which moves a locker, revealing a new door. Go inside and take the MASTER DISK, GAMMA CHEMICAL and RESONATOR GRENADE, then leave the floor and go back down to the second.

Head in the direction of Jack's call and go through the first door on the left. Insert all three chemicals into the machine and solve the puzzle. You must mix up the Alpha, Beta and Gamma chemicals to match the colour on the right. Almost any combination works so just mix five doses of chemical together and you'll be awarded the EXPLOSIVE. Now head to Jack's cell and use the EXPLOSIVE on the weakened wall of the cell next door to free Jack and assume control of him once again.

Head back down to the first floor and take out the patrolling guard. Now walk towards the sealed hatch to trigger a call from Angela. You can now go through the hatch to the lower sections of the ship. Take out the lone guard and go through the door behind him to access a control room. Take the MACHINE GUN BULLETS from inside then head back down the passage and through the door at the other end. Kill the three patrolling guards and take the SHOTGUN SHELLS. Now take any of the three ladders and go to the bottom right-hand corner of the map (the one on the pause screen) and you'll find a switch – hit it to operate the crane, then go back down and through the doors to the refrigerated area.

Walk over to the control panel and use it to open the lockers. Examine the 'stif' and take the CAPTAIN'S ID CARD. Then take the HEALTH PACK from around the corner and leave the area. Dash across to the far side of the room and go up the ladder. Use the ID card on the locked door panel and you'll be asked for voice identification – use the DICTAPHONE from your inventory.

Once Inside, take out the three guards (more will appear if alerted) and go through the glass doors into the central room. After the cut-scene, take the HEALTH PACK and examine the flashing dot on the map – it's Greywolf. Now leave the area and head towards the other side of the cargo room. To the left is a short passage with a door at the end. Examine the keypad to the side of the door and you'll automatically use the keycard you were just given. Go inside, kill the guard, take the MACHINE GUN BULLETS, then go through the door leading upstairs. Go to the stairs and head down the passage to find a PROXIMITY MINE. Now go back to the elevator to meet an old 'friend'.

DEFATING RAMIREZ

This wise-ass Mexican has set up camp in the gun turret and switched on a set of flood lights to dazzle you. Your first aim is to take out these lights, but Ramirez blasts you whenever you poke your head out. Hide behind the crate facing Ramirez and equip your decoy shells use the fast equip by utilising the D-pad. Toss a shell out from one side of the crate, then walk around the other side and empty a Stimulator Automatic + cartridge into one of the lights before hiding again. Repeat this process on each of the four lights until you get a clear view of Ramirez. He now starts tossing grenades at you in groups of three. So dodge left and right to avoid the explosions then, when three grenades have exploded, hit him with heavy gunfire. He will keep throwing grenades, so keep repeating the process until all his energy is drained.

After a cut-scene, you assume the role of Angela – she must find Jack. Examine Alan Sharpe's corpse, then leave the room. Avoiding the red detector lights, go down the blue tunnel (the second corridor on the right) and through the door at the end. Take the SALINE and the DOCUMENT (from the neighbouring room) and examine the gene sequencer machine. Now go down the yellow tunnel and through the door at the end. Take the ADRENALINE and open the cupboard to obtain a couple of PROXIMITY MINES. Now go back up to the central hub (where the device that controls the security is situated) and plant a PROXIMITY MINE next to the unit. Back off and shoot the mine until the other system is blown apart, deactivating the laser guards over the last remaining door. Kill the guards that emerge (use the other mine and lure them towards you) then go through the door. You have now located Jack. Walk around the outside of this lab area and up the walkway to the corridor Jack encountered previously. Go into the room where the snake door was and open the door using the lockpick. You now have control of the security camera, which you can use to get the codes you need to crack those paintings. Remember them?

The first picture had the clue: 'Eve holds the key to Adam in her heart', so zoom in on the statue of Eve and onto her chest. Write down the code and then go to the picture and input the code. After the last digit has been entered you're awarded the EVE KEY. Go down the spiral staircase to the right of the snake door and insert the EVE KEY into the door lock below. Now go down in the lift. Kill the two patrolling guards using the stealth kill and then go through the next door. Take the HEALTH PACK and then walk forward to trigger a cut-scene in which you meet Adam.

DEFATING ADAM

Go to the control panel in the centre of the room and activate the gas supply. Run to the two illuminated terminals in the top and bottom corners of the lab and release the gas. You have to lure Adam in front of the gas pipes and hit him with five shots to stun him motionless in front of the pipes for a few of seconds. At this point, you must switch your aim to the pipe and shoot to release a cloud of gas and poison the mutant. When he recovers, he charges at you, so keep your distance until his rage subsides. Repeat this process until Adam falls unconscious – you can now take a sample of his blood to make up Jack's antidote. Head back through the lab and down the blue

passage where the gene sequencer machine is. Use this machine to make the BLOODY MARY VACCINE, which you need to take to Jack.

When you resume control of Jack, go upstairs and through the snake door. Take the DOCUMENTS from the desk then equip your GOGGLES to look at the red illuminated area in the centre of the room. This shows the combination for the second painting, so write it down and then go and enter it. Take the ADAM KEY that's awarded for solving the puzzle and go and insert it in the laser door at the end of the passage.

In the new area, kill the two guards and then take the SHOTGUN SHELLS and ADRENALINE before operating the sliding lift. As you descend, stand at the front of the lift and shoot the fuel drums near the guards to kill them. When you get to the bottom, go down the long passage and through into the refrigerated area. Kill the two guards and take the MACHINE GUN BULLETS. Now operate the control panel in the top corner then go back the way you came. Follow the crates as they are winched through the laser passage, taking care to pick off all the guards that emerge. When you get to the end, go through the door to emerge in the lab where Angela fought Adam. Go up to the computer terminal and enjoy the cut-scene. Go back upstairs to join Angela and make your escape... oh, but hang on – Adam's back!

DEFATING ADAM (again)

For this battle, Adam stays rooted to the central section of the area – you must circle him while blasting him repeatedly with your machine gun/missile launcher. Adam has two forms of attack; the most common is his single shot blue plasma ray – which you can anticipate by the way his weapon charges blue before he shoots. To avoid this, dodge left or right when he fires. His other attack is his red plasma ray, which is slightly harder to dodge.

When his weapon charges red before he shoots, he emits a sweeping semi-circular ray that can be dodged by either hiding behind a pillar or running around to his back. Each time Adam shoots in your direction, stand out from behind a pillar and unleash machine gun fire on him. You can pick up infinite amounts of ammo from the amino blots scattered around the level. His energy is slow to deplete so keep plugging away to gradually wear him down. When his energy reaches a certain level, all of the pillars are destroyed – now you have nothing to hide behind when avoiding the plasma ray. When this occurs, you must tone down the amount of bullets you fire so that you have time to run away from his red plasma attacks.

Eventually, when Adam's health bar is eradicated, another cut-scene kicks in that shows him gearing-up for a final attack. In this last encounter, Adam chases you around the level, but don't let his large health bar fool you. Look for the red dot on the map and unleash a barrage of shots at him. He should stop, groan and hold his head – giving you the opportunity to dash over to the red dot, pick up his JUDGEMENT CANNON (this is what the red dot was) and hammer the final nail in his coffin. □

OPENING THE STAR LOCKER

To access the Star Locker at the LEILA building, beat all the records in the VR Missions and then complete the game. A message will appear at the end of the credits telling you that you have unlocked the secret. In your next game, go to the LEILA building and unlock the Star Locker to be awarded all weapons complete with infinite ammo.



POWERLINE - HINTS AND TIPS

**Knockout Kings 2001 [PS2]**

SLES 50128

Want to play as some of the greatest fighters in boxing history?

Try entering the name below to play as one of boxing's greats

Entering the name **MECCA** will earn you Ashy Knucks.Entering the name **MRBARRY** will earn you Barry Sanders.Entering the name **DEFIAGRN** will earn you David Defagbon.Entering the name **DEMART** will earn you David DeMartino.Entering the name **JGIMB** will earn you Jason Gimbil.Entering the name **BAILEY** will earn you Joe Mes.**NBA STREET [PS2]**

SLES 50219

Q: I want to mix the game up a bit and make things a bit different

A: You may have noticed the different symbols you can change during the loading sequence. Try playing around with these to see what cheats you activate. Here are a couple to start with.

For ABA socks:

Enter the game code; Microphone, Microphone, Microphone, Up, Microphone, Up.

For Tiny players:

Enter the game code; Microphone, Basketball, Microphone, Basketball.

For Big heads:

Enter the game code; Microphone, Turntable, Shoe, Turntable, Up.

For Tiny heads:

Enter the game code; Microphone, Shoe, Basketball, Shoe, Up.

For a WNBA ball:

Enter the game code; Basketball, Turntable, Shoe, Basketball, Up.

For an EA Big Ball:

Enter the game code; Basketball, Turntable, Microphone, Basketball, Up.

For a Beach Ball:

Enter the game code; Basketball, Turntable, Turntable, Shoe, Up.

For a Soccer Ball:

Enter the game code; Basketball, Shoe,

Turntable, Basketball, Up.**For an ABA ball:**

Enter the game code; Basketball, Turntable, Turntable, Basketball, Up.

For a Medicine ball:

Enter the game code; Basketball, Turntable, Turntable, Backboard.

For a NuFX ball:

Enter the game code; Basketball, Turntable, Backboard, Basketball, Up.

For a Volley ball:

Enter the game code; Basketball, Turntable, Turntable, Microphone, Up.

**Grand Theft Auto 3 [PS2]**

SLES 50330

Q: Is there an easy way to get the cops off my back?

A: If you're sick of having the police chasing you and want to get them off your back, try this to lower your wanted level.

Simply press **□**, **△**, **□**, **△**, **↑**, **↓**, **←**, **→**, **↑**, **↓** while in the game.Alternatively, if you're looking for a bit of fun and want to pump up your wanted level, simply press **□**, **△**, **□**, **△**, **←**, **→**, **↑**, **↓** while in the game.For **ABA socks:**

Enter the game code; Microphone, Microphone, Microphone, Up, Microphone, Up.

For Tiny players:

Enter the game code; Microphone, Basketball, Microphone, Basketball.

For Big heads:

Enter the game code; Microphone, Turntable, Shoe, Turntable, Up.

For Tiny heads:

Enter the game code; Microphone, Shoe, Basketball, Shoe, Up.

For a WNBA ball:

Enter the game code; Basketball, Turntable, Shoe, Basketball, Up.

For an EA Big Ball:

Enter the game code; Basketball, Turntable, Microphone, Basketball, Up.

For a Beach Ball:

Enter the game code; Basketball, Turntable, Turntable, Shoe, Up.

For a Soccer Ball:

Enter the game code; Basketball, Shoe,

**Gradus III and IV [PS2]**

SLES 50038

Q: I want more firepower.

What can I do?

A: How does double weapons sound?

To do this, pause the game and enter: **↑**, **↑**, **↓**, **↓**, **←**, **←**, **→**, **→**, **↑**, **↑**. Now you will be at full power with double weapons.

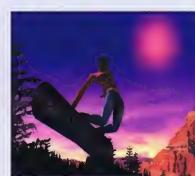
Q: I want a gun that's a bit different to everything else.

A: How about a laser gun? To do this, pause the game and enter:

↑, **↑**, **↓**, **↓**, **←**, **←**, **→**, **→**, **□**.

You will be at full power with the laser weapon.

Note: You must first beat the first boss and then you can enter the codes. You will only be able to enter the codes once per beaten level. So if you beat two levels without using codes you will be able to use them twice on the next level. Or you can save them and use them all in one level.

**ICO Tricky [PS2]**

SLES 50760

Q: Why can't I do anything at the windmill?

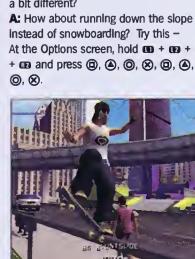
A: Have you noticed when you get to the top of the windmill that the camera angle pans around so that you are looking back at the blades?

Q: Are you stuck at the waterfall with that piston jumping up and down?

A: You need to jump at exactly the right time to ensure you can reach the ridge high above you. Hmm, maybe when it lowers...

Q: Do you keep on dying at the end when the bridge starts to retract?

A: Have you tried going the other way? After all, the girl is offering you her hand.

**Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 [PS2]**

SLES 50217

Q: Is there any way I can watch all the movies?

A: Try looking for a "Peepshow".

Q: Are there any extra characters I can get?

A: You can actually access the skaters that Tony Hawk created. Can you guess what names you need to use for them? [Hint: Tony has two sons called Spencer and Riley]

**Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty [PS2]**

SLES 50383

Q: I'm playing the game through after completing it. Is there any way I can

make the experience different?

A: Try collecting dog tags from the enemy guards by telling them to freeze.

To do this, you'll need to get pretty close and then point your gun at them, then move so they can see you and keep the gun pointed at their head. They should wriggle around and drop any dog tags they have. Collecting 46 will give you the bandana (unlimited ammo) and 78 will give you the stealth suit.

**ICO [PS2]**

SLES 50760

Q: Why can't I do anything at the windmill?

A: Have you noticed when you get to the top of the windmill that the camera angle pans around so that you are looking back at the blades?

Q: Are you stuck at the waterfall with that piston jumping up and down?

A: You need to jump at exactly the right time to ensure you can reach the ridge high above you. Hmm, maybe when it lowers...

Q: Do you keep on dying at the end when the bridge starts to retract?

A: Have you tried going the other way? After all, the girl is offering you her hand.

**Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2 [PS2]**

SLES 50217

Q: How can I get all the bikes?

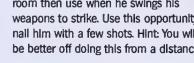
A: You could try playing through the game and unlocking them as you go.

Alternatively, you could try going to the main menu and pressing **□**, **△**, **□**, **△**, **↑**, **↑**, **↓**, **↓**.**Silent Hill 2 [PS2]**

SLES 50306

Q: I am trying to kill the due with the metal head in the staircase in the apartment block.

A: Notice that he is very slow, so you need to lure him over to one side of the room then use when he swings his weapons to strike. Use this opportunity to nail him with a few shots. Hint: You will be better off doing this from a distance.



Q: I can't push the clock out of the way in Apartment 208. How do I go about this?

A: You need to set the clock to the right time. Hint: Remember Henry, Mildred and Scott?

Q: Where do I find the code for the cylindrical shaped lock on the chest in the last hospital cell?

A: The guy who owned the box sounds like he was pretty crazy. Maybe we should start by looking in the special treatment facility. Hint: Try getting to the roof first.

**Extermination [PS2]**

SLES 50240

Q: I am in the Maximum Security Area and I am stuck at a wall of water.

A: That water has to be flowing from somewhere! If you try getting a run up and running into the wall of water as far you can, you should see a pipe. Try "cutting" the water supply. (maybe your knife could be helpful?)

**007 Agent Under Fire [PS2]**

SLES 50339

Q: I can't beat Bloch at the end of the level 'Forbidden Depths'.

A: You've probably seen the red targets above the瀑 you. You've probably even tried firing rockets at them, and guiding them towards the target, but have you tried detonating the rocket just before it gets to the target? Hint: try hitting **□**.**Resident Evil: Code Veronica X [PS2]**

SLES 50306

Q: I can't get the Hawk medallion out of the area with the metal detectors.

A: You know that briefcase you picked up earlier? Maybe that has something in it that could help. In your inventory, try rotating the briefcase so that you can see both of the locks on the front. Maybe that will make it easier to open!

Q: I'm in the room with paintings and don't know what order to press them in.

A: This one seems to be pretty hard, so if

the shortlist

Want the definitive verdicts on the PS2 games available right now? Then welcome to The ShortList.

OPS2 AWARDS

To filter out the pearls from the swine, OPS2 has introduced a brand new colour-coded ratings system.



GOLD

Only awarded to games that score the full 10/10.



SILVER

Awarded to titles that score 9/10.



BRONZE

Awarded to titles that score 8/10.

4X4 EVOLUTION

[Take 2/Feral Reality]
Flash but slick off-road 4x4 racer. Falls to make a lasting impression.
Overall 05

7 BLADES

[Konami/KCE]
With a solid adventure with a healthy dose of chopsocky gameplay.
Overall 06

18 WHEELER

**[Acclaim/Sega/
Acclaim Cheltenham]**
Brash, chunky and colourful truck racer. Unfortunately it just doesn't offer enough substance to satisfy the hardened gamer.
Overall 06

ACE COMBAT:

DISTANT THUNDER
[SCEE/Namco]
Best Ace Combat yet. A graphically-polished flight sim with a variety of missions.
Overall 07

AGE OF EMPIRES II: THE

KING
**[Konami/Microsoft/
Ensemble Studios/KCET]**
PC-style real-time strategy with depth and longevity. Absolutely engrossing, if a touch difficult to control.
Overall 07

AIRBLADE

[SCEA/Criterion]
Intricate visuals, sublime handling, massive airs – everything you could want hoverboarding to be.
Overall 08

ALL-STAR

BASEBALL 2002
[Acclaim/Acclaim Studios Austin]

An enjoyable all-round game of baseball with oodles of depth, and surprisingly compelling to watch as well as to play.
Overall 07

ALONE IN THE DARK:

THE NEW NIGHTMARE

[Infogrames/Darkworks]
An undeniably scary survival horror game series, but one that fails to frighten the pants off the PS2 in this comeback.
Overall 06

AQUA AQUA:

WETRIX 2.0

[SGI/2ed Two]
Addictive, well-realised update of the N64 puzzler Wetrix.
Overall 07

ARCTIC THUNDER

**[Midway/Midway/
Inland Productions]**
Crude visuals, but plenty of fast and furious gameplay.
Overall 07

ARMORED CORE 2

[Ubi Soft/From Software]
Infinitely-tweakable first-person mech shooter.
Overall 07

ARMY MEN:

**ATTACK:
BURNING REVENGE**

[3DO/3DO]
Dullsville helicopter game.
Overall 02

ARMY MEN:

GREEN ROGUE
[3DO/3DO]
On-rails shooter that manages to plumb new depths of soldering tedium.
Overall 01

ARMY MEN:

SARGE'S HEROES 2
[3DO/3DO]
Another poorly realised shooter, from the series that stars little green plastic soldiers.
Overall 03

ATV OFFROAD

[SCEE/Rainbow Studios]
A decent stunt racer with dubious pack AI but more than enough thrills.
Overall 08

BALDR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE

[Interplay/Black Label Studios]
Play Dungeon & Dragons in digital format. An RPG that does the PS2 great justice.
Overall 08

BASS STRIKE

[THQ/PAI Corporation Ltd]
Play PS2 Yes? Get out in the fresh air and do it for real
Overall 04

BATMAN VENGEANCE

[Ubisoft/Ubisoft Soft]
Interesting action adventure, but just a little too 'rally' to provide a real challenge.
Overall 06

BLOODY ROAR 3

[Virgin/Hudsonsoft]
Fur Fighters meets Wwf in this beastly brawler. A lot of fur, but not quite enough bite.
Overall 06

BURNOUT

**[Acclaim/
Digital Leisure]**
Outlaw grown-up, and learns how to crash properly. Thrilling, edgy race action that will threaten your no claims bonus.
Overall 08

CAPCOM VS SNK 2

[Capcom/Capcom]
A superb 2D beat-em-up from the house that knows all there is to know about combat. With endless two-player fun.
Overall 08

CART FURY

CHAMPIONSHIP
[Midway/Midway]
Arcade racer with crazy physics and a dose of high-speed hard shouldering.
Overall 06

CENTRE COURT: HARD HITTER

**[Midway/Midway/
Midway/Gameloft]**
Cheap, arcade-style tennis game. Fun Multiplayer option, but not much else.
Overall 04

CITY CRISIS

[Take 2/Syscom]
Innovative helicopter adventure with neat control system and beautiful landscapes.
Overall 06

CRASH BANDICOOT: THE WRATH OF CORTEX

**[Vivendi Universal/
Traveler's Tales]**
Crash spins onto PS2 but little has changed from PSone.
Overall 06

CRAZY TAXI

[Acclaim/3DO/Activision]
Arcade thrills aplenty in this no-holds-barred city-smashing racer. If you want speed, buy this now.
Reviewed OPS2/07/Overall 08

CRICKET 2002

[SCEA/E Sports/A EA Sports]
The last leather-on-willow sim on any console, ever. Relax and make like it's summer.
Overall 08

DARK CLOUD

[SCEE/Level 5]
An enthralling RPG with atmospheric music and a world-building element thrown in for good measure.
Overall 07

DAVE MIRRA

FREESTYLE BMX 2
[Acclaim/2-Axis]
Orthodox but impressive, this BMX sim has an inventive array of tricks.
Overall 07

DEAD OR ALIVE 2

[SCEE/Tecmo]
Blistering beat-em-up that's famous for its stealthy gameplay and collection of extremely well-endowed lady fighters.
Overall 07

DEVIL MAY CRY

**[Capcom/Eurosoft/
Capcom]**
Mediocre rip-roaring battling with lush surroundings and a superb gothic atmosphere. One of the best PS2 games yet definitely lady-filled.
Overall 09

DISNEY'S DINOSAUR

[Ubisoft/Ubisoft Soft]
Poor movie spin-off. Don't inflict it on the kids.
Overall 04

DNA

**[Virgin Interactive/
Hudsonsoft]**
Gene warfare and confusing puzzles abound in this bizarre manga adventure.
Overall 06

DONALD DUCK: QUACK TACO

**[Ubisoft/Disney Interactive/
Digital Leisure]**
First-generation platformer that suffers from Stone Age gameplay and graphics.
Overall 04

DRAGON'S LAIR

**[Digital Leisure/
Chimeralotronics]**
Unpleasant retro adventure. Should have stayed firmly stuck on the Laser Disc where it belonged.
Overall 02

DRAGON'S LAIR II: TIMEWARP

**[Digital Leisure/
Chimeralotronics]**
Painfully dull arcade sequel.
Overall 01

DRIVEN

**[BAM! Entertainment/
BAM! Studios Europe]**
Poor racing game from a poor film licence.
Overall 04

DRIVING EMOTION TYPE-S

[Ubi Soft/Square]
Dislike racer. Fails to evoke any emotion at all.
Overall 04

DROPSHIP: UNITED PEACE FORCE

[SCEE/Studio Camden]
Impressive combat sim that rewards commitment with paced and varied gameplay.
Overall 08

DYNASTY WARRIORS 2

[Midas Interactive/KOEI]
Epic battle micing strategy, sword slashing, horse riding and shooting people.
Overall 07

ECCO THE DOLPHIN: DEFENDER OF THE FUTURE

[SCEE/Sega/Appaloosa]
You're a dolphin and it's up to you to save the world from an alien invasion. Relax in the new age calm of this underwater adventure.
Overall 08

EPHEMERAL FANTASIA

[Konami/KCE East]
Bemani-style RPG where pulling off a guitar solo is integral to the plot.
Overall 07

ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND

[Activation/LucasArts]
Adventure that includes smart visuals, witty script and intelligent puzzles.
Overall 05

ESPN INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD

[Konami/KCEO]
Graphically impressive athletics sim marred only by iffy AI.
Overall 06

ESPN NATIONAL HOCKEY NIGHT

[Konami/KCEO]
Other hockey simms on the market with better gameplay put this in the sin bin.
Overall 06

ESPN NBA 2NIGHT

[Konami/KCEO]
Hardcore gameplay makes this one for basketball heads only.
Overall 06

ESPN X GAMES SKATEBOARDING

[Konami/KCEO]
Not-very-extreme skateboarding sim with some unsightly graphical glitches. You're best off sticking with Tony Hawk's.
Overall 05

ESPN WINTER X-GAMES SNOWBOARDING

[Konami/KCEO]
Lifelike snowboarder, ruined by unsightly bland graphics, unresponsive controls and a lack of excitement.
Overall 06

ETERNAL RING

[Ubi Soft/From Software]
Unoriginal Japanese RPG. As painful as its title.
Overall 03

EVERGRACE

[Ubi Soft/Crave Entertainment/From Software]
An utterly depressing role-playing game, that fails to engage the player at any meaningful level.
Overall 02

EVIL TWIN

[Ubi Soft/In-Utero]
Adventure from the dark side of platforming. Average, far-from-perfect action with 76 levels of twisted plot.
Overall 05

EXTERMINATION

[SCEE/Deep Space]
Alien-inspired survival horror-fest that is set in a deserted Antarctic research base. Positively crawling with cool design innovations.
Overall 07

EXTREME-G 3

[Acclaim/Acclaim]
A neon beast of a future bike racer that requires skill and brains. Takes some 'inspiration' from the WipItz series. Not for the fain-hearted.
Overall 08

F1 2001

[EA Sports/EA Sports]
Another solid PlayStation 2 Formula One title, but ultimately it's a tad soulless.
Overall 07

F1 CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON 2000

**[EA Sports/EA/
Visual Sciences]**
Hardcore F1 fans will find this a little too easy.
Overall 06

F1 RACING CHAMPIONSHIP

[Video System/Ubi Soft]
Good attention to detail, but a lot less fun than its (many) competitors.
Overall 05

FANTAVISION

[SCEE/SCB]
The world's first fireworks game. Not enormous, but of rare and random beauty.
Overall 07

FIFA 2001

**[EA Sports/
EA Sports Canada]**
Great graphics, but Second Division gameplay.
Overall 06

FIFA 2002

**[EA Sports/
EA Sports Canada]**
Despite admirable improvements, this is still a goal down to Pro Evolution.
Overall 07

FORMULA ONE 2001

[SCEE/Studio Liverpool]
Still the best F1 game, but the PS2 yet. All the drivers, tracks and cars included. Load it up and feel the speed.
Overall 08

six of the best

PLATFORMERS



1. JAK AND DAXTER: THE PRECURSOR LEGACY

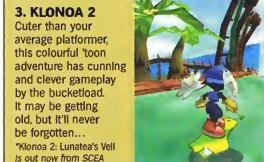
The sheer scope of the level, the attention to detail, the glorious animation... Jak and Daxter is everything a great platform game should be and more. No self-respecting PS2 owner should be without it.

**Jak and Daxter is out now from SCEA*



2. MAXIMO

More than just a nice 3D version of Ghosts 'N Goblins, Maximo is the perfect combo of platform leaping and sword-swinging action. Beautifully detailed, and entertaining, too. **Maximo is out now from THQ*



3. KLONOA 2

Cuter than your average platformer, this colourful 'toon adventure has cunning and clever gameplay by the bucketload. It may be getting old, but it'll never be forgotten... **Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil is out now from SCEA*



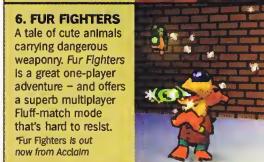
4. RAYMAN M

Romney Revolution impressed with its 'toon-quality graphics. Rayman M took the adventures of the dislodged hero a step further, adding multiplayer elements to a winning formula. **Rayman M is out now from Ubi Soft*



5. CRASH BANDICOOT: THE WRATH OF CORTEX

Naughty Dog's crate-busting bandicoot was a star on PSone. His PS2 debut translated all the action – but added little else. **Crash Bandicoot is out now from Vivendi*



6. FUR FIGHTERS

A tale of cute animals carrying dangerous weaponry, Fur Fighters is a great one-player adventure – and offers a superb multiplayer Fluff-match mode that's hard to resist. **Fur Fighters is out now from Acclaim*

FREAK OUT

(Swing/Treasure)
Unique cartoon action-adventure with a kooky Japanese twist. Grab enemies with a bewitched scarf.

Overall 07

FUR FIGHTERS

(Acclaim/Bizarre Creations)
Cute fluffy creatures armed to the teeth which shotgun blast each other to pieces. The toy cupboard will never look innocent again.

Overall 08

GAUNTLET: DARK LEGACY

(Midway/Midway East Games)
A neat RPG that unfortunately comes off as a pale imitation of its coin-op ancestor.

Overall 05

GIANTS: CITIZEN KABUTO

(Interplay/Planat Moon)
The Reaper might be cool, but loading times hamper this port of a complex PC battle game.

Overall 06

GIFT

(Cryo Interactive/Ekosity)
New take on the 3D platformer but lets its French imagination get in the way of its gameplay.

Overall 06

GLOBAL TOURING CHALLENGE: AFRICA

(Rage/Rage Warrington)
An impressive racer that is further lifted by clever use of interesting locations.

Overall 07

GRADUUS III & IV

(Konami/KCET)
Ollie 2D arcade shooter. More PSone than next-gen.

Overall 02

GRAND THEFT AUTO III

(Rockstar Games/DMA Dev)
The original crime sim goes 3D. The game has its flaws, but there's nothing quite like as sick, inventive and funny on the shelves. Buy it.

Overall 08

GRAN TURISMO 3: A-SPEC

(SCE/PlayStation Digital)
If you didn't know already, GT3 is the greatest driving game in the world. Buy it now.

Overall 09

G-SURFERS

(Midway/Interactive/Bands Interactive)
Futureuristic racer that's improved by an innovative track editor.

Overall 07

GUILTY GEAR X

(Virgin/Sammy)
Pushes hard at beat-'em-up boundaries. The start of a new wave of next-gen 2D fighters.

Overall 08

GUN GRIFFON BLAZE

(Swing/GameArts)
A mech shooter for robot obsessives everywhere.

Overall 07

H30 SURFING

(Take 2/ASCII)
Inadequate surf sim, although the water's well rendered.

Overall 04

HALF-LIFE

(Vivendi/Universal/Valve/Gearbox)
The award-winning PC first-person shooter/adventure arrives on PS2 in resplendent form. An essential purchase.

Overall 09

HEADHUNTER

(SCEE/Amaze)
Dirty Harry meets MGS2 in a world where the law is controlled by bounty hunters. There's a great game here somewhere, but we only got glimpses of it.

Overall 07

HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC

(3DO/3DO)
Patchy PC-style adventure.

Overall 03

HOLODRAMA TIME TRAVELLER

(Digital Leisure/Sega)
It may be called a 'classic' but avoid this like the plague.

Overall 00

INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE SOCCER

(Sony/Big Blue Entertainment/Taito)
Easy one of the worst footy sims ever to grace the PS2.

Overall 02

INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER

(Konami/WB)
Genuine stunts and more instant terrace gratification take ISS up to the PS2 level.

Overall 06

JAK AND DAXTER: THE PRECURSOR LEGACY

(SCEE/Naughty Dog)
A brilliant platformer from the makers of Crash Bandicoot introduces two heroes you'll be cheering a lot more of.

Overall 09

JAK AND DAXTER: THE PRECURSOR LEGACY

(SCEE/Naughty Dog)
A brilliant platformer from the makers of Crash Bandicoot introduces two heroes you'll be cheering a lot more of.

Overall 05

LE MANS 24 HOURS

(Infogrames/Melbourne House)
Accessible for the gamer who's daunted by ultra-accurate sim-style vehicle handling, but has depth and thrills in abundance.

Overall 08

LOTOS CHALLENGE

(Virgin Interactive/Kuju)
With a whole back catalogue of branded cars, it's a Lotus fan's dream. It's just a shame their speed isn't conveyed.

Overall 05

MADDEN NFL 2001

(EA Sports/EA Sports)
A rewarding and complete NFL game. Could convert non-believers to the sport.

Overall 08

MADDEN NFL 2002

(EA Sports/EA Sports)
Exemplary American football title with a pristine pedigree. Virtually faultless, aside from being just another yearly update of a franchise. Go buy it.

Overall 09

MAMOYO

(THQ/Capcom)
A tribute to Ghosts 'N Goblins and modern gaming resulting in one of the strongest 3D platformers available.

Overall 08

MDK2

(Interplay/BioWare)
Original game on Dreamcast and PS2, this third-person action shooter in space has lost nothing in translation. Has three playable characters and is destined to be a cult classic.

Overall 08

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY

(Konami/KCEJ)
A must-own, state-of-the-art tactical espionage action game that's reason enough to buy a PS2. A superbly paced, surprising story with intelligence and soul. Unbeatable sound and graphics – a benchmark for its royal status, though.

Overall 10

MIDNIGHT CLUB

(Rockstar/Angel Studios)
Speedy, urban racing that boasts hooning and action-packed New York and London environments. Sadly, the gameplay ain't that great.

Overall 04

MODERN GROOVE: MINISTRY OF SOUND

(Ubisoft/Moderngroove)
An entertaining lightshow generator, containing five full dance albums.

Overall 06

MONSTERS, INC.

(SCE/Disney Interactive)
Disney Platform game, based on the film. Initially amusing but sloppy and basic with a lifespan of no more than a few hours, though the film clips are entertaining.

Overall 04

MOTO GP

(SCE/Nacon)
Gran Turismo on two wheels! Ish. A fantastic motorcycle sim that rewards repeated play.

Overall 07

MOTOR MAYHEM

(Infogrames/Beyond Games)
Unoriginal deathmatch-based vehicle blasting.

Overall 05

MTV MUSIC GENERATOR 2

(Codemasters/Jester)
Home DJ sample/mixer music maker. It's enormous fun and night-on-tauntless. This is exciting and well put together – pick it up and start making your own chowns!

Overall 09

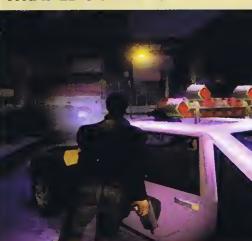
the shortlist

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|---|--|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| MX 2002 FEATURING RICKY CARMICHAEL [THQ/Pacific Coast Power] Polished and engaging motorcross sim that utilises its subject matter to great effect. Overall 07 | NX RIDER (Infogrames/Paradigm) Motocross/supercross sim that lacks the true grittiness and excitement of the sport. Overall 06 | NBA HOOPZ (Midway/Eurocom) Instant arcade-style basketball sim but there are better ones on the street. Overall 06 | NBA LIVE 2001 (EA Sports/ EA Sports Canada) Solid and playable. Thrills are thin on the ground, though. Overall 06 | NBA LIVE 2002 (EA Sports/ EA Sports Canada) An update of NBA Live 2001. Only for true basketball nuts. Overall 06 | NBA STREET (EA Sports/Big/EA Sports) Great looks, great to play, but not what most want. There's room for improvement. Overall 06 | NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB (Acclaim/Acclaim Studios Austin) American football game that has unique features, but unable to compete with Madden 2002. Overall 08 | NHL 2001 (EA Sports/ EA Sports Canada) EA Sports' perennial ice hockey licence that hits the mark. As Jamie Oliver might say, "Puckal!" Overall 08 | NHL 2002 (EA Sports/ EA Sports Canada) The definitive ice hockey videogame, and a marked improvement on NHL 2001. Overall 08 | NHL HITZ 2002 (Midway/Big Box) A satisfying, if short-lived, arcade-style ice hockey game. Overall 06 | NY RACE (Wanadoo/Kaito) Average future taxi racer, based on the opening sequence of Luc Besson's | |
| sci-fi epic The Fifth Element. Nothing crazy to see here. Overall 05 | ONI (Rockstar/Bungle Software) New character animation in an enjoyable third-person sci-fi romp. Overall 07 | ONIMUSHAS: WARLORDS (Capcom/Capcom) Impressive survival horror that lets the PlayStation 2 run riot. Does suffer from an iffy PAL conversion, though. Reviewed OPS2/13/09/Overall 08 | OPERATION WINBACK (Midas Interactive/KOE) Lacks variety, but still manages to be an enjoyable stealth shooter, nevertheless. Overall 06 | PARAPPA THE RAPPER (SCE/PlayStation) | PARAPPA THE RAPPER (SCE/PlayStation) | QUAKE III (Eidos/Bullfrog) In four-player, this PS2 is the best multiplayer yet. A technical tour de force, it runs like greased lightning and looks absolutely gorgeous. Overall 09 | RAYMAN M (Ubisoft/Ubisoft Studios France) Based primarily on multiplayer action. Some good ideas, but the gameplay is nothing new. Overall 06 | RAYMAN REVOLUTION (Ubisoft/Ubisoft Soft) Animation-quality graphics elevate this classic platformer starring a disjointed hero. A title worthy of PS2. Overall 09 | RC REVENGE PRO (Acclaim/ Acclaim Cheltenham) A distinct lack of any discernable speed makes this an avoidable kart racer. Overall 03 | READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2 (Midway/Midway) A marvellous, arcade-based comedy boxing game, pitting ridiculous cartoon fighters against each other. Overall 07 | RED FACTION (THQ/Volition) Ace first-person shooter that melds MGS-style tactics and the all-out blasting of the hallowed Quake III. Marred only by some average level design. Overall 08 |
| Afterburn: An extra kick of power in flight simulators. AB: Artificial intelligence. Analogues: Re: Dual Shock 2. Registering degrees of input, as opposed to digital's on/off status. Boards: Snowboards or games featuring the alpine boarder. Coin-op: Coin-operated arcade videogames. Cut-scene: Explanatory, non-playable scene in videogame [also 'FMV']. CPU: Central Processor Unit. Brains of PS2. Dev kits: Programmable PS2s used by developers. D-pad: Direction pad on | DualShock controller: Controller for PS2. Dual Shock 2: Controller designed for PS2 with analogue. ECTS: European Computer Trade Show. E3: Electronic Entertainment Expo (US). FPS: First-Person Shooter (eg Quake III). Hack 'n' slash: Refers to game usually fantasy featuring blade combat. High res: High | PORTAL RUNNER (3DO/3DO) Vikki, of Army Men notoriety, gets her own title. It's the best of a bad bunch. Reviewed OPS2/13/09/Overall 05 | PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2003 (Konami/Konami TYO) Konami's TYO updates ISS Pro Evolution and creates the best PS2 football sim yet. Overall 09 | PROJECT EDEN (Eidos/Namco) Looks beyond some not-great visuals and you'll lose track to this complex and satisfying first-person shooter/adventure. Overall 08 | PROJECT EDEN (Eidos/Namco) Looks beyond some not-great visuals and you'll lose track to this complex and satisfying first-person shooter/adventure. Overall 08 | RIDGE RACER V (SCE/Nacon) A popular racer, but high hopes were scuppered by the limited size and a lack of originality. Overall 07 | RING OF RED (Konami/KCE) A meaty title that's fun? Oh yes. A must-buy for the discerning robo-fetishist after something different. Overall 08 | ROBOT WARLORDS (Midas Interactive/DaZZ) Many other superior mech games make this redundant in a somewhat minority genre in Australia. Overall 06 | ROBOT WARS (BBC Multimedia/Climax) TV show tie-ins rarely work. This could have been a whole lot better. Stick to watching the real 'bot battles instead. Overall 05 | RUGBY (EA Sports/ Creative Assembly) So far the only PS2 game to represent this sport. More akin to Moden than FIFA in approach, a highly enjoyable and refined take on the sport. EA Sports does it again. Overall 08 | RUMBLE RACING (EA/EA) Fast and furious arcade stunt racer that has tons of challenge and replay value, especially in Two-Player mode. Full of totally insane courses to put you through your paces. Overall 08 |
| resolution (graphics). RTD: Head Up Display. Screen furniture such as map, speedometer, etc. Iconography: Graphical shorthand defining game, genre etc. Low res: Refers to poor quality graphics. L3: Pressing down on the left PS2 controller's right joystick. Mid-game: Bonus, playable games found in larger titles. Polygon: Building block of videogame graphics. PSone: The precursor to PS2. If you don't know what this is then frankly there's no hope for you. | resolution (graphics). RTD: Head Up Display. Screen furniture such as map, speedometer, etc. Iconography: Graphical shorthand defining game, genre etc. Low res: Refers to poor quality graphics. L3: Pressing down on the left PS2 controller's right joystick. Sim: Simulation. Straight Man: Sideways while looking straight. USB: Port to connect peripherals such as keyboard to PS2. If there's a term, word or phrase that's still taxing your brain cells, let us know and we'll include it here. | Real-time: When one second of game time equals one second in the real world. RPC: Role-playing game. RTS: Real-time strategy. R3: Pressing down on the PS2 controller's right joystick. Sim: Simulation. Straight Man: Sideways while looking straight. USB: Port to connect peripherals such as keyboard to PS2. If there's a term, word or phrase that's still taxing your brain cells, let us know and we'll include it here. | REAL-TIME: When one second of game time equals one second in the real world. RPC: Role-playing game. RTS: Real-time strategy. R3: Pressing down on the PS2 controller's right joystick. Sim: Simulation. Straight Man: Sideways while looking straight. USB: Port to connect peripherals such as keyboard to PS2. If there's a term, word or phrase that's still taxing your brain cells, let us know and we'll include it here. | REZ (SCE/Sega [JUGA]) Flight combat with a difference from within the system. Exploring the relationship between sound and colour this techno shooter provides pure gamplay. Overall 09 | REZ (SCE/Sega [JUGA]) Flight combat with a difference from within the system. Exploring the relationship between sound and colour this techno shooter provides pure gamplay. Overall 09 | SHADOW OF MEMORIES (Konami/KCET) Filmic adventure that keeps the surprises coming with a serpentine plot. Overall 08 | SOA (Konami/KCET) Filmic adventure that keeps the surprises coming with a serpentine plot. Overall 08 | SPACE RACE (3DO/3DO) The cartoon kart racer in its simplest form. Lacks originality and is a poor Mario Kart rip-off. Overall 05 | SPASHDOWN (Infogrames/ Rainbow Studios) Above average Sea-Doo racer, with impressive water effects. The racing is sluggish, though. Overall 07 | SPY HUNTER (Midway/Paradigm) Pretend to be James Bond. Captures the spirit of the original game and adds further shiny next-gen knobs. Overall 08 | |
| Silence of the Lambs. Team Silent | SILENT HILL 2 (Konami/KCET) One of the most atmospheric and genuinely frightening titles on PS2. Like all of your worst nightmares rolled in to one relentless videogame. Overall 08 | SILENT SCOPE (Konami/KCET) Slick but simple shooting gallery-style game where you play a police sniper. A great launch title that we're still playing. Reviewed OPS2/01/Overall 08 | SILENT SCOPE 2 (Konami/KCET) A worthwhile update of this arcade sniper sim, though the formula is looking tired now. Overall 07 | SK SK TRICKY (EA Sports/Big/ EA Sports Canada) The sequel to the PS2's sleeper hit is now bigger and better. New courses included! Overall 09 | STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER (Activation/LucasArts) Mesmerising 3D Star Wars blaster with engaging missions and film-perfect sound effects. Overall 09 | STAR WARS: SUPER BOMBAD RACING (Activation/Lucas Learning) Banal cartoon kart racer. The Force is weak with this one. Overall 05 | STATE OF EMERGENCY (Take 2/VS Entertainment) A shallow but worryingly enjoyable game that puts the player at the centre of a riot. Overall 06 | STREET FIGHTER EX3 (Capcom/Eurosoft/Mikha) A decent enough cut 2D fighter. Is it devout fans. Overall 06 | SUMMONER (THQ/Volition) Although confined to strict RPG plot confines, this is an entertaining spectacle with expert storytelling. Overall 08 | SUPER BUST-A-MOVE (Acclaim/Tako) Another update of a classic game but a pointless one as it adds nothing original to the timeless gameplay. Overall 04 | |
| SOFTBALL (EA Sports/ EA Sports Canada) A satisfying, if short-lived, arcade-style softball game. Overall 06 | SKY ODYSSEY (SCE/Cross for SCEI) A flight sim where – somewhat unusually – you don't have to shoot anything, just complete crazy missions. Overall 08 | SKY SURFER (Virgin Interactive/ Idea Factory) Whoever thought that jumping off a plane attached to a board would make a good game should be shot. Overall 03 | SALT LAKE 2002 (Ozisoft/Attention To Detail) Soulless Winter Olympics game. Decent weather effects but the majority of events are rather tedious. Not much variety and a limited life span. | SMUGGLER'S RUN (Rockstar/Angel Studios) Mission-based fun in which you escape from the cops with a trunkload of body, impressive free-roaming environments. Overall 07 | SMUGGLER'S RUN 2: HOSTILE TERRITORIES (Rockstar/Angel Studios) Impressively big, fast and intense, but not much different to its predecessor. Overall 07 | SMUGGLER'S RUN 2: HOSTILE TERRITORIES (Rockstar/Angel Studios) Impressively big, fast and intense, but not much different to its predecessor. Overall 07 | SOUL REAVER 2 (Eidos Interactive/ Crystal Dynamics) Soul-sucking fantasy adventure that revolves around the exploits of Raziel and his huge Sun Reaver sword. Overall 07 | TARZAN FREERIDE (Ubi Soft/Disney Interactive) Based on a Disney film of the same name, this tries to be different with 'surfing' tree branches, but it doesn't work. Overall 04 | SWING AWAY GOLF (EA Sports/T&E Soft) Cutesy PSone golf sim that's let down by a poor PS2 conversion. Overall 03 | | |
| SOFTBALL (EA Sports/ EA Sports Canada) A satisfying, if short-lived, arcade-style softball game. Overall 06 | SOFTBALL (EA Sports/ EA Sports Canada) A satisfying, if short-lived, arcade-style softball game. Overall 06 | SOFTBALL (EA Sports/ EA Sports Canada) A satisfying, if short-lived, arcade-style softball game. Overall 06 | SOFTBALL (EA Sports/ EA Sports Canada) A satisfying, if short-lived, arcade-style softball game. Overall 06 | SOFTBALL (EA Sports/ EA Sports Canada) A satisfying, if short-lived, arcade-style softball game. Overall 06 | SOFTBALL (EA Sports/ EA Sports Canada) A satisfying, if short-lived, arcade-style softball game. Overall 06 | SOFTBALL (EA Sports/ EA Sports Canada) A satisfying, if short-lived, arcade-style softball game. Overall 06 | SOFTBALL (EA Sports/ EA Sports Canada) A satisfying, if short-lived, arcade-style softball game. Overall 06 | SOFTBALL (EA Sports/ EA Sports Canada) A satisfying, if short-lived, arcade-style softball game. Overall 06 | SOFTBALL (EA Sports/ EA Sports Canada) A satisfying, if short-lived, arcade-style softball game. Overall 06 | | |
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Can't get hold of one of the games in The ShortList? Something gone wrong? Need to check a release date? Here's the definitive list of all Aussie PS2 publishers.

six of the best

WHAT ED'S PLAYING:



1. GRAND THEFT AUTO 3

The most free-roaming videogame ever, combining a love of destruction, gunfights, auto smashes, criminal activity and insane stunts. Topping it off, a kick-ass soundtrack brings comedy and cranking tunes to the mix. "GTA3 is out now from Take 2 Interactive

2. REZ

William Gibson's vision of a visual 3D Internet comes to life - you fly through a wire-frame universe, a hacker gunship. Wild, explosive and intensely visual. "Rez is out now from SCEA

3. ICO

Gorgeous, delicious graphics with medieval and mechanical themes. You're a small boy who sticks you light ghosts to unlock the castle's secrets and protect your spectral girlfriend. Classic. "ICO is out now from SCEA

4. GRAN TURISMO 3

Psychotic Japanese developers devote life to car game. Real cars speed past cameras with realistic handling. Mad attention to detail and really meaty sound, with great replay value. "GT3 is out now from SCEA

5. RED FACTION

Solid PC-style first-person-shooter combines destructive walls with enormous weapon loadout in story of a rebellion on a Martian colony. Exciting, visually impressive and fun. "Red Faction is out now from THQ

6. JAK AND DAXTER

Great 3D platformer eradicates loading times and delivers a Disney cartoon grade adventure. Hoverbikes, Ewok village citadels, shooting pelicans. Superb. "Jak And Dexter is out now from SCEA



TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT

[SCEA/Namco] Fantastically playable and graphically spectacular beat-'em-up. The tagging moves should be the talk of the show. Instalment reaches the shelves. Meanwhile, keep your eyes peeled for Tekken 4. Overall 08

TEST DRIVE: OFFROAD WIDE OPEN

[Infogrames/Angel Studios] A fast, but limited offroad racer, from the makers of Smuggler's Run. Overall 06

TG DARE DEVIL

[Kemco/Papaya Studios] Mission-based retro car racer that fails to provide innovation or excitement. Overall 05

THE BOUNCER

[SCEE/Squaresoft] A fun, accessible brawler whose adventuring elements are fairly limited. Overall 06

THE FLINTSTONES IN VIVA ROCK VEGAS

[Swing! Entertainment/Toka] Stone Age karting action based on the titular film licence. Yabba dabba... Actually, don't. Ever. Overall 02

THE MUMMY RETURNS

[Viendi Universal/Blitz Games] Sub-standard, adventure-based movie tie-in. You're better sticking to the more reliable Tomb Raider collection. Overall 05

THE SIMPSONS: ROAD RAGE

[EA/Radical Entertainment] It's Crazy Toon but with Bart and Homer behind the wheel. Overall 06

THE WEAKEST LINK

[Activision/Activision] You'll get more enjoyment playing along with the TV show than you will from putting up with the viper-tongued Anne Robinson. Witch. Overall 06

THE PARK WORLD

[EA/Bullfrog] Take on the role of a theme park manager for a day in this engrossing god sim, where pleasing the crowds and getting those turnstiles a-spinnin' is your prime directive. Overall 07

THIS IS FOOTBALL 2002

[SCEA/Team SoHo] An atmospheric and playable addition to a revived series. Overall 07

THUNDERHAWK: OPERATION PHOENIX

[Eidos/Core Design] A brave attempt to blend arcade and simulation with choppers. Overall 07

TIGER WOODS

[EA Sports/EA Sports] Authentic golf sim, a tad undermined by a random control system. Overall 06

TIME CRISIS 2

[SCEA/Namco] PS2's first on-rails light gun title sets the standard for others to follow. Has a great Two-player co-op mode. Overall 08

TIMEPLITTERS

[Edios/Free Radical Design] Fun, frantic and inventive first-person shooter. Buy it for the addictive split-screen multiplayer madness. Overall 09

TOKYO XTREME RACER

[Crave/Ubisoft/Genki] Sedate, and thus dull, racer. Overall 04

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

[Activision/Neversoft] Fantastic skate sim that's perfect to play whether you've got an hour or two hours to spare. Notable for being the first PAL game to have online network play, too. Overall 09

TOP GUN

[Virgin Interactive/Digital Integrations] A flight sim that seems to have been designed by people who have never even seen a plane. A few arcade thrills. Overall 04

TWISTED METAL: BLACK

[SCEE/Inognito] A 10-year-old 3D car-pocalypse that's brilliant. On time to drive around in frenzied vehicle-based hedonism. This is everything that you'd expect a Twisted Metal game to be on PS2 – and then some. Overall 08

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

[Take 2/Silicon Dreams] A very run of the mill soccer title which, with its very narrow focus on a single tournament, has extremely limited appeal. If you have ISS or FIFA, you don't need this. Overall 06

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

[Infogrames/Epic Games] A satisfyingly gory, totally over-the-top and immensely playable first-person shooter. Overall 08

VAMPIRE NIGHT

[SCEE/Namco] A vampire-blasting light gun extravaganza that looks great but has questionable replay value once the bad boys are all put to rest. Again, great for building bulging biceps, though. Overall 08

VICTORIOUS BOXERS

[Imperial/Interactive/ESPI] Offbeat, story-based Japanese boxing title that sadly lacks the killer punch. Overall 04

WACKY RACES STARRING DASTARDLY AND MUTTLEY

[Infogrames/Infogrames] Misty-eyed fans of the TV series will love the visuals. A shame the game isn't all that great. Overall 06

WALT DISNEY'S JUNGLE BOOK: GROOVE PARTY

[Ubisoft/Disney Interactive] The game guaranteed to get to dancing round your living room like a loon. Overall 04

WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE? 2ND EDITION

[Konami/KCE] Cool moch thriller from Metal Gear's Hideo Kojima, with bonus MGS2 demo just to get you in the mood. Overall 09

WILD WILD RACING

[Rage/Rage] Off-road buggy-racing game with initially discouraging handling. Stick with it, though, and the Stunt mode can become quite addictive. Overall 04

WIPEOUT FUSION

[SCEE/Studio Liverpool] Style and substance are here in the most fully realised WipEout yet. This future racer is as smart and extreme as it gets. With a cracking soundtrack. Overall 09

WOODY WOODEPECKER: ESCAPE FROM BUZZ BUZZARD'S PARK

[Codemasters/Blade] Extremely playable snooker sim that may convert sceptics. Take part in the all-star tournament playing as Hendry or Doherty. Incredibly playable. Overall 08

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOOKER 2002

[Take 2/Interactive] Extremely playable snooker sim that may convert sceptics. Take part in the all-star tournament playing as Hendry or Doherty. Incredibly playable. Overall 08

WORLD DESTRUCTION LEAGUE: THUNDER TANKS

[3DBox] A rockin' sim that's brilliant in Four-Player Deathmatch mode. Lacks lasting appeal in One-Player mode, though. Overall 07

WORLD DESTRUCTION LEAGUE: WARJETZ

[3DBox] A ripper of a future war battles. Looks like an average PSone game, though. Overall 02

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

[SCEE/Evolution Studios] The most realistic, exciting rally experience ever committed to a videogame. This is a pristine example of next-generation programming that no self-respecting gamer should be without. Overall 09

WWF SMACKDOWN! JUST BRING IT!

[THQ/Yuke's] Step into the spandex pants of The Rock and Chums. This is without a doubt the most realistic representation of the WWF experience on a console yet. Top stuff. Overall 08

X-SQUAD

[EA/EA Square] A tedious team-based third-person shooter. Overall 05

ZONE OF THE ENEMERS

[Konami/KCE] Cool moch thriller from Metal Gear's Hideo Kojima, with bonus MGS2 demo just to get you in the mood. Overall 09

Acclaim

03 9574 5900
www.acclaim.com
Ten Hours' Level 4, 28 Clarendon St
South Melbourne, Vic 3205

Activation Pty. Ltd.
02 8876 5712
www.activation.com
Century Plaza Level 1, 41 Rawson St
Epping, NSW 2121

Electronic Arts
02 9254 3111
www.electronicarts.com
Level 3, Suite 3 139 Herbert St
St Leonards, NSW 2065

Interplay Australia
02 9431 1311
www.interplay.com
Unit 1, Level 3 39 Herbert St
St Leonards, NSW 2065

Interplay [Internegames]
02 9565 0120
www.gameweb.com.au
32 Bowden St
Alexandria, NSW 2015

Red Art Enterprises Pty. Ltd.
02 9881 3812
www.red-art.com.au
Unit 1, 1 Short St
Chatswood, NSW 2065

Sony Computer Entertainment
02 9324 9500
www.sce.net
Level 1, 63-73 Ann St
Surry Hills, NSW 2000

Take 2 Interactive
02 9483 2455
www.take2interactive.com.au
Unit 5, 11-16 Bridge Rd
Hornsby, NSW 2077

THQ Asia Pacific Pty. Ltd.
03 9573 9200
www.thq.com
Level 2, 578 St Kilda Rd
Melbourne, Vic 3004

Ubisoft Entertainment
02 8330 1800
www.ubisoft.com
Level 3, 111-117 Devonshire St
Surry Hills, NSW 2000

Viendi Universal Interactive Australia Pty. Ltd.
02 9902 7722
www.vi-interactive.com.au
101a, Blizzard Ground floor, 1 Chandon St
St Leonards, NSW 2065



COLUMBIA DVD

AMERICAN PIE 2**YES! ANOTHER TEEN MOVIE!**

The sequel to the most unlikely hit of 2000, is already here on DVD! American Pie 2 has actually achieved what most other sequels fail miserably at. It's actually out-done itself! That's right, this is more American Pie than American Pie itself. OPS2 are giving away five rare promotional packs away. Each pack contains a DVD movie, cap, T-shirt and a beach towel. For your chance, just tell us two characters that appear in both movies.

**FIVE COPIES TO BE WON!****STAR WARS:
JEDI STARFIGHTER 2****HAPPY LIKE YODA**

Star Wars: Jedi Starfighter 2 is a prime example of a game that's been equipped with plenty of intricacies that only gets unveiled to you over subsequent plays. Initially, you may be mistaken for thinking that the game remains identical to the original, released early in 2001. Over time though, you'll see that not only has it received a massive leap in on-screen activity, there is also new variety and gameplay features to master. With five copies to give away, OPS2 are giving you the chance to see this for yourself!

To be in the running, just tell us the name of the actor who played Luke Skywalker in the original *Star Wars* movie.

**How to Enter**

Send entries to OPS2@derwenthoward.com.au with the name of the competition in the Subject line or alternatively, send envelopes via snail mail to Official PlayStation Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction NSW, 2022. Entries should be clearly marked and include your name, age, phone number, address and the name of the competition you are entering. All competitions close May 15th, 2002 and winners will be published in the July issue of OPS2, on sale June 26, 2002.

**SHAUN PALMER'S
PRO SNOWBOARDER****WIN PRO SNOWBOARDER AND GO ON THE PISTE**

Shaun Palmer scored 9/10 in OPS2's reviews, and for very good reason. This is one fine snowboarding game, and exhibits superb fun from top to bottom. Furthermore it's based on the same game engine as *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3*, as will some of Activision's other future games. We have five copies up for grabs. To be in the running, just tell OPS2 another game that's out soon that will also be based around the THPS game engine. Clue: Arachnophobes beware!

**SHADOWMAN 2****STRANGE BLOKE, GREAT GAME**

Acclaim's *Shadowman* is now one of PS2's most recognisable characters and the latest PlayStation 2 version is the best in the series.

Mike Le Roi is a strange bloke, to say the least, and his adventures are amongst the darkest that you'll come across in a gaming adventure.

But don't be afraid ... to pick up a brand-new copy and a *Shadowman* key ring, tell us one other game, released on any platform, that the good folk at Acclaim have been responsible for.



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CAPCOM

MAXIMO

Ghosts To Glory

THQ

DID SOMEONE SAY FREEBIES!

More Maximo than you can poke a stick at!

Maximo is much more about being a knight in shining armour. It's about rescue. It's about love. It's about revenge. Most of all though, it's about superb gaming!

Reviewed last issue in OPS2, Maximo is potentially one of this year's biggest games. Not only has it revived the true spirit of some of videogaming's all-time classics, it has also taken the very best in modern day 3D platformers and utilised them to achieve a fantastic blend of videogame entertainment.

Initially, Maximo may seem simplistic and elbow deep in cute tomfoolery but a rich adventure in the throes of a

detailed and well-designed world are apparent at the core of the game.

Capcom are the team behind Maximo. Since the dawn of videogame history, the Japanese gaming legends have also been behind some of the very best games ever seen. Amongst them, includes the Resident Evil series, Devil May Cry, Onimusha, Mega Man, Street Fighter and the forthcoming Auto Modellista.

Maximo represents their 'step back' in time, as they re-create many of the classic experiences that were first brought to gamers of the early '80s through the levels of



Maximo: rescuing a helpless maiden is all in a day's work

Ghosts 'N Goblins. And just like their Capcom stable mates, Maximo represents one of the most well thought out games and the quality of the team behind it is apparent throughout. Courtesy of our friends at THQ.

OPS2 has 20 copies of Maximo to give away! That's right! 20 OPS2 readers will soon be open up their mailbox to find one of the year's best platform adventures.

Want to throw your hat in the ring? It's easy. All you have to do is tell us in 30 words or less why you deserve your very own copy of Maximo, and why you'd like to save your sweetheart Sophia.



YOU CAN TELL WHO'S BEEN THERE.

PlayStation.2
THE THIRD PLACE



A color photograph of a man with glasses and a blue t-shirt holding a crying baby. He is holding a black Sony DualShock controller in his right hand, pointing it towards the baby's face. The baby is looking up at the controller with a distressed expression.

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